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Lyra Innocentium:

THOUGHTS IN VERSE

ON

CHRISTIAN CHILDREN,

THEIR WAYS, AND THEIR PRIVILEGES.

B:1045

"Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them."

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JOHN HENRY AND JAMES PARKER.

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60977

"O DEAREST, dearest Boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn."

Wordsworth.

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TO

ALL FRIENDLY READERS.

There are, who love upon their knees
To linger when their prayers are said,
And lengthen out their Litanies,
In duteous care for quick and dead.
Thou, of all Love the Source and Guide!
O may some hovering thought of theirs,
Where I am kneeling, gently glide,
And higher waft these earth-bound prayers.

There are, who gazing on the stars
Love-tokens read from worlds of light,
Not as dim-seen through prison-bars,
But as with Angels' welcome bright.

O had we kept entire the vow
And covenant of our infant eyes,
We too might trace untrembling now
Glad lessons in the moonlight skies.

There are, to whom the gay green earth
Might seem a mournful penance cave;
For they have marr'd their holy birth,
Have rent the bowers that o'er them wave.
Where underneath Thy Cross they lie,
Mark me a place: Thy Mercy's ray
Is healing, even to such as I,
Else wherefore bid us hope and pray?

What if there were, who laid one hand
Upon the Lyre of Innocence,
While the other over sea and land
Beckon'd foul shapes, in dream intense
Of earthly Passion? Whoso reads,
In pity kneel for him, and pour
A deep heart-prayer (O! much it needs)
That lies may be his hope no more.

Pray that the mist, by sin and shame
Left on his soul, may fleet; that he
A true and timely word may frame
For weary hearts, that ask to see
Their way in our dim twilight hour;—
His lips so purg'd with penance-fire,
That he may guide them, in Christ's power,
Along the path of their desire;

And with no faint nor erring voice
May to the wanderer whisper, "Stay:
God chooses for thee: seal His choice,
Nor from thy Mother's shadow stray:
For sure thine holy Mother's shade
Rests yet upon thine ancient home:
No voice from Heaven hath clearly said,
'Let us depart;' then fear to roam."

Pray that the Prayer of Innocents
On Earth, of Saints in Heaven above,
Guard, as of old, our lonely tents;
Till, as one Faith is ours, in Love

We own all Churches, and are own'd.—
Pray Him to save, by chastenings keen,
The harps that hail His Bride enthron'd
From wayward touch of hands unclean.

Feb. 8, 1846.

LYRA INNOCENTIUM.

I.

Holy Baptism.

1.

THE MOST HOLY NAME.

"Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

ONCE in His Name who made thee,
Once in His Name who died for thee,
Once in His Name who lives to aid thee,
We plunge thee in Love's boundless sea.

Christian, dear child, we call thee;
Threefold the Bath, the Name is One:
Henceforth no evil dream befall thee,
Now is thy heavenly rest begun.

Yet in sharp hours of trial
The mighty seal must needs be prov'd:
Dread Spirits wait in stern espial:—
But name thou still the Name belov'd.

Name it with heart untainted,
Lips fragrant from their early vow,
Ere Conscience yet have swerv'd or fainted,
Ere Shame have dyed the willing brow.

Name it in dewy morning,
When duly for the world's keen fray
With prayer and vow thy soul adorning,
Thou in thy bower salut'st the day.

In quiet evening name it,
When gently, like a wearied breeze,
Thou sink'st to sleep; O see thou claim it—
That saving Name—upon thy knees.

Name it in solemn meetings,
'Mid chanted anthems grave and clear,
When toward the East our awful greetings
Are wafted ere our Lord appear.

Upon thy death-bed name it:
So mayst thou chase th' infernal horde,
So learn with Angels to proclaim it,
Thrice Holy, One Almighty Lord.

2.

NEW CREATION.

"He hath set the world in their heart."

WHO may the wondrous birth declare
Of Earth and Heaven so vast and fair?
Yet whensoe'er to Love's pure spring
A helpless Little One they bring,
Those wonders o'er again we see
In saving mystery.

All in the unregenerate child
Is void and formless, dark and wild,
Till the life-giving holy Dove
Upon the waters gently move,
And power impart, soft brooding there,
Celestial fruit to bear.

God on the first day spake in might,
"Let there be Light," and there was Light:
So o'er the Font enlightening grace
As surely beams from JESUS' face,
As when in Jordan's wave He bow'd
Beneath the hovering cloud.

The second day, God stor'd on high
The dewy treasures of the sky:
And who the pure glad drops may tell,
Reserv'd in yon ethereal well,
Faith to revive upon her way,
Hope's weary thirst allay?

The third day dawn'd: at His command
The rushing waters left the land,
With herb and flower the green earth smil'd:
So art thou rescued, Christian Child,
From tossings of the world's rude sea,
In vernal peace to be.

Bright rose the fourth triumphal morn,
For then the sun and stars were born,
And the soft moon, whose chaste cold ray
Tells tidings of a purer day.
Christ in the Font became our Noon,
The holy Church, our Moon.

To the fifth dawn and eve belong
Motion and life, and flight and song,
In watery deeps and deeps of Heaven:—
Such gift to thee, dear babe, was given,
When from the earth He bade thee rise
To greet Him in the skies.

The sixth dread day, the last in place,
Dread in its deeps of untold grace,
Moulded, at morn, the cold dull clay,
Inspir'd, at eve, the quickening ray;
The same sad morn and evening mild
Renew'd us, earth-defil'd.

Thee, awful image of the All-good,
That one atoning day renew'd
For the whole world: the fontal wave
To each apart the glory gave,
Washing us clean, that we might hide
In His love-piercèd side.

Thus in each day of toil we read
Tokens of joy to Saints decreed.
What if the day of holy rest
The sleep foreshew of infant blest,
Borne from the Font, the seal new given,
Perchance to wake in Heaven?

3.

GUARDIAN ANGELS.

"He shall give His Angels charge concerning thee."

"TELL me now thy morning dream."
"In the flowery sweet spring-tide
I beheld a sparkling stream,
Where by thousands Angels glide;
Each beneath the soft bright wing
Seem'd a tender babe to bring,
Where the freshest waters fell
In an ever-living well.

Far within the unearthly Fount
Shew'd the pure Heaven's steadfast rays,
Stars beyond what eye can count
Deepening on the unwearied gaze.
Whoso of those springs would draw,
Wondrous joy and wondrous awe
On his soul together rise,
Starlight keen and dark blue skies.

Round the margin breath'd and bloom'd
Flowers from Eden: far below
Gems from Heaven the sides illum'd:—
But nor flower nor gem might show
Half so fair as your soft charms,
Who in your own Seraphs' arms
Here are wafted, in pure vest
Rob'd, and wash'd, and seal'd, and bless'd.

There one moment lay immers'd
Each bright form, and ere it rose,
Rose regenerate, Light would burst
From where golden morning glows,
With a sudden, silent thrill,
Over that mysterious rill.
Ne'er so bright, so gentle, sweep
Lightnings o'er the summer deep.

In a moment came that ray,
Came but went not: every sprite,
Through its veil of mortal clay,
Now is drench'd in quickening light;

Light wherewith the Seraphs burn,
Light that to itself would turn
Whatsoe'er of earth and shame
Mars even now the new-born frame.

Through the pure Heavens now at large
See the immortal guardians soar,
Joying to behold their charge
Purg'd, wing'd, brighten'd more and more,
As the strong undying spark
Buoys them upward to God's Ark,
To the Throne where all repair
With the first-fruits of their care.

Ne'er with smile so glad and kind
Welcom'd God's High-Priest of old
Abraham's seed with Abraham's mind
Offering gifts from field and fold,
Lamb or kid, or first-ripe corn,
Glory of the Paschal morn;—
When the shades from Salem's wall
On Siloah deepest fall;—

As in that entrancing dream,
On my sleep-embolden'd eyes,
From the shrine, the approving beam
Thrill'd, as each new sacrifice,
Each new living ray, each soul
Borne beyond where shadows roll,
With its faithful Watcher, found
Place in the eternal round."

O sweet morning dream, I pray,
Pass not with the matin hour;
Charm me :—heart and tongue allay,
Thoughts that ache and eyes that lower.
From the Fountain to the Shrine
Bear me on, thou trance divine;
Faint not, fade not on my view,
Till I wake and find thee true.

4.

BAPTISMAL VOWS.

"That which ye have already, hold fast till I come."

O HAPPY new-born babe, where art thou lying?
What are these sounds that fill with healing balm
The hallow'd air, of power to still thy crying
At once, and nurse thee into heavenly calm?

"His Bosom bears me, who on earth descended,
Of a poor Maid vouchsafing to be born.
His saving words, with holy water blended,
Have brought the glory to my prime of morn."

Joy to thy nurse, more joy to her who bare thee,
Lamb of that Shepherd's flock, whose name is Good!
As He hath won, for ever may He wear thee,
And keep thee purified with His dear blood!

"Amen: and therefore am I sworn His servant,
His sacred Heart through life to be my rest,
To watch His eye with adoration fervent,
Foe of His foes, and in His white robe drest."

O blest, O safe, on God's own bosom leaning!
But passion-hours are nigh:—keep thou thy place:
And far and wide are evil watchers, gleaning
The lambs that slight the Shepherd's fostering grace.

"Nay, I will drink His cup; my vow is taken;
With His baptizing blood mine own shall blend;
Ne'er be that holiest charge by me forsaken,
The dying Saviour's trust to each true friend."

Well hast thou sworn, and be thy warfare glorious:
But Saints are pure, the Church is undefil'd,
And JESUS welcom'd from His cross victorious
A Virgin Mother to a Virgin Child.

"Then ask for me of the dread Son of Mary,
Whose arms eternal are young children's home,
A loving heart, obedient eyes and wary,
Even as I am to tarry till He come."

Prayer shall not fail, but higher He would lead thee:
His bosom-friend ate of that awful Bread:
So will He wait all day to bless and feed thee;—
Come thou adoring to be blest and fed.

"'Tis meet and right, and mine own bounden duty.
Good Angels guide me with pure heart to fall
Before His Altar-step, and see His Beauty,
And taste of Him, my first, my last, mine all."

5.

SIGN OF THE CROSS.

(*See the First Prayer-book of Edward VI.* "*Receyve the signe of the Holy Crosse, both in thy forehead, and in thy breste.*")

"I will write upon him My new Name."

WHERE is the mark to JESUS known,
Whereby He seals His own?
Slaves wore of old on brow and breast
Their master's name impress'd,
And Christian babes on heart and brow
Wear JESUS' token now.
His holy Priest that token gave
With finger dipt in the life-giving wave.

When soldiers take their sovereign's fee,
And swear his own to be,
The royal badge on forehead bold
They shew to young and old.
Nor may we hide for fear or shame
The persecuted Name.
Only with downcast eyes we go
At thought of sin that God and Angels know.

If the dread mark, though dim, be there,
The watchers will not bear
From spirits unblest or reckless man
Unpitying word or ban.
"Mine own anointed touch ye not,
Nor mine handwriting blot.
Where'er my soldiers cross your path,
Honour my royal Sign, or fear my wrath."

The Shepherd signs his lambs in haste,
Ere on the mountain waste
He loose them, far and wide to stray,
And whoso mars their way,
Or scorns the awful Name they show,
That Shepherd counts him foe.
Fresh from His arms are these, and sure
We read His token here undimm'd and pure.

Fresh from th' eternal Arms are these,
Or sporting on our knees,
Or set on earth with earnest eye
And tottering feet, to try

Their daily walk, or newly taught
Grave prayer and quiet thought.
The fragrant breath of their new birth
Is round them yet: avaunt, ill airs of earth.

Ye elder brethren, think on this!
Think on the mighty bliss,
Should He, the Friend of babes, one day,
The words of blessing say:—
"My seal upon My lambs ye knew,
And I will honour you:"—
And think upon the eternal loss
If on their foreheads ye deface the glorious Cross.

6.

DEATH OF THE NEW-BAPTIZED.

"The dew of Thy birth is of the womb of the morning."

WHAT purer brighter sight on earth, than when
The Sun looks down upon a drop of dew,
Hid in some nook from all but Angels' ken,
And with his radiance bathes it through and through,
Then into realms too clear for our frail view
Exhales and draws it with absorbing love?
And what if Heaven therein give token true
Of grace that new-born dying infants prove,
Just touch'd with JESUS' light, then lost in joys above?

II.

Cradle Songs.

1.

THE FIRST SMILE[a].

"Post et ridére cœpi; dormiens primo, deinde vigilans."
August. Confess. i. 8.

Tears from the birth the doom must be
Of the sin-born—but wait awhile,
Young mother, and thine eye shall see
The dawning of the first soft smile.

It comes in slumber, gently steals
O'er the fair cheek, as light on dew:
Some inward joy that smile reveals;
Sit by and muse; such dreams are true.

[a] For this Poem the Author is indebted to a dear friend.

Clos'd eyelids, limbs supine, and breath
So still, you scarce can calm the doubt
If life can be so like to death—
'Tis life, but all of earth shut out.

'Tis perfect peace; yet all the while
O'er marble brow and dimpled chin
Mantles and glows that radiant smile,
Noting the spirit stirr'd within.

Oh dim to this the flashing ray,
Though dear as life to mother's heart,
From waking smiles, that later play;
In these earth claims the larger part.

'Tis childish sport, or frolic mirth,
Or the fond mother's blameless guile,
Or glittering toy,—some gaud of earth,
That stirs him to that merry smile.

Or if in pensive wise it creep,
With gradual light and soberer grace,
Yet shades of earthly sorrow sleep,
Still sleep upon his beauteous face.

But did the smile disclose a dream
Of bliss that had been his before?
Was it from heaven's deep sea a gleam
Not faded quite on earth's dim shore?

Or told some Angel from above
Of glories to be his at last,
The sunset, crowning hours of love—
His labours done—his perils past?

Or, thought of trial for her breast,
Did the mild spirits whisper then,
"From the Baptismal Fount, O blest,
Thou shalt be ours, dear child, again?

"Thou shalt be ours, and heaven be thine,
Thy victory without peril given;
Sent a brief while on earth to shine,
And then to shine a light in heaven.

"And her that folds thee now so warm,
And haply thinks 'twere death to part,
Her shall a holier love inform,
A clearer faith enlarge her heart."

Blest smile !—so let me live my day,
That when my latest sun shall set,
That smile reviving once may play
And gild my dying features yet:

That smile to cheer the mourners round
With hope of human sins forgiven;
Token of earthly ties unbound,
Of heart intent on opening heaven.

2.

CHILDREN LIKE PARENTS.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

When travail hours are spent and o'er,
And genial hours of joy
In cradle songs and nursery lore
All the glad home employ,

Full busy in her kindly mood
Is Fancy, to descry
The welcome notes of fatherhood,
In form, and lip, and eye.

And elder brethren's hearts are proud,
And sisters blush and smile,
As round the babe by turns they crowd,
A brief and wondering while.

With eager speed they ready make
Soft bosom and safe arm,
As though such burthen once to take
A blessing were and charm.

And ever as with hastening wing
His little life glides on,
By power of that first wondrous spring
To all but babes unknown,

Easier each hour the task will grow,
To name the unfolding flower,
By plumage and by song to know
The nestling in his bower.—

Oh, while your hearts so blithely dance
With frail fond hopes of earth,
Will ye not cast one onward glance
To the true heavenly birth?

Will ye not say, "God speed the time
When Spirits pure, to trace
The hues of a more glorious prime,
Shall lean from their high place,

"And mark, too keen for earthly day,
The Father's stamp and seal,
Christ in the heart, the Living Ray,
Its deepening light reveal?"

Oh, well the denizens of Heaven
Their Master's children know,
By filial yearnings sweet and even,
By patient smiles in woe,

By gaze of meek inquiry, turn'd
Towards th' informing Eye,
By tears that to obey have learn'd,
By claspèd hands on high.

Well may we guess, our Guardians true
Stoop low and tarry long,
Each accent noting, each faint hue,
That shews us weak or strong.

And even as loving nurses here
Joy in the babe to find
The likeness true of kinsman dear
Or brother good and kind,

So in each budding inward grace
The Seraphs' searching ken
The memory haply may retrace
Of ancient, holy men.

For of her Saints the Sacred Home
Is never quite bereft;
Each a bright shadow in the gloom,
A glorious type, hath left:

And by those features, stern or sweet,
Of bold or gentle gleam,
Heaven's keen-eyed Watchers haply mete
What mortals holy deem.

"And hark," saith one, "the soul I guide—
I heard it gently sigh
In such a tone as Peter sigh'd,
Touch'd by his Saviour's eye."

"And see," another cries, "how soft
Smiles on that little child
Yon aged man! even so full oft
The lov'd Disciple smil'd."

And oh, be sure no guardian fires
  Flash brighter in their joy
Than theirs, who scan the meek desires
  And lowly lone employ

Of maiden in her quiet bower,
  When haply glance or mien
Reminds them of the lily flower
  With Blessèd Mary seen.—

But as when babes by look or tone
  Brother or friend recall,
In all the Parents' right we own,
  Their memory blend with all,

So in earth's saintly multitude
  Discern we Saints above:—
In these, the Fountain Orb of Good,
  Pure Light and endless Love.

3.

THE LULLABY.

"Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept."

THE western sky is glowing yet,
The burnish'd Cross upon the spire
Gives token where the Sun hath set,
Touch'd faintly with its last dim fire.
Pause on thy way from evening prayer,
And listen: through the twilight air
Floats from yon open cottage door
A soft strain warbled o'er and o'er.

A maiden rocks a babe to sleep,
And times the cradle to her song;—
A simple strain not high nor deep,
But awful thoughts thereto belong:
For oft in holy Church's shade
She to that strain hath lent her aid:—
"In Thee I put my steadfast trust,
Defend me, Lord, for Thou art just[b]."

[b] Psalm lxxi. 1. New Version.

Without a Psalm she breathes her strain,
  Lest haply rader ears be nigh;
But to the babe her sense is plain,
  In that half word of lullaby.
That sound still varied, still the same,
To him is as the Saving Name
Pronounc'd in every tone, and strong
To guard his sleep from every wrong.

Angels may read such words of power,
  And infants feel them: we the while
But dimly guess, till in His hour
  We see the Lord's unclouded smile.
Then spells that guarded us of old
Their hidden virtue shall unfold:
Charm'd writings are they now; no eye
May read them till the fire be nigh.

O awful touch of God made Man!
  We have no lack if Thou art there,
From Thee our infant joys began,
  By Thee our wearier age we bear.

From Satan's breath, from Herod's sword,
The cradle where Thou watchest, Lord,
Is safe: the Avenger's rushing cry
Is like a sister's lullaby.

4.

SLEEPING ON THE WATERS.

"And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?"

While snows, e'en from the mild South-west,
Come blinding o'er all day,
What kindlier home, what safer nest,
For flower or fragrant spray,
Than underneath some cottage roof,
Where fires are bright within,
And fretting cares scowl far aloof,
And doors are clos'd on sin?

The scarlet tufts so cheerily
Look out upon the snow,
But gayer smiles the maiden's eye
Whose guardian care they know.

The buds that in that nook are born—
Through the dark howling day
Old Winter's spite they laugh to scorn:—
What is so safe as they?

Nay, look again: beside the hearth
The lowly cradle mark,
Where, wearied with his ten hours' mirth,
Sleeps in his own warm ark
A bright-hair'd babe, with arm uprais'd,
As though the slumberous dew
Stole o'er him, while in faith he gaz'd
Upon his Guardian true.

Storms may rush in, and crimes and woes
Deform the quiet bower;—
They may not mar the deep repose
Of that immortal flower.
Though only broken hearts be found
To watch his cradle by,
No blight is on his slumbers sound,
No touch of harmful eye.

So gently slumber'd on the wave
The new-born seer of old,
Ordain'd the chosen tribes to save;
Nor dream'd how darkly roll'd
The waters by his rushy brake,
Perchance even now defil'd
With infants' blood for Israel's sake,
Blood of some priestly child.

What recks he of his mother's tears,
His sister's boding sigh?
The whispering reeds are all he hears,
And Nile, soft weltering nigh,
Sings him to sleep; but he will wake,
And o'er the haughty flood
Wave his stern rod;—and lo! a lake,
A restless sea of blood!

Soon shall a mightier flood thy call
And outstretch'd rod obey;—
To right and left the watery wall
From Israel shrinks away.

Such honour wins the faith that gave
Thee and thy sweetest boon
Of infant charms to the rude wave,
In the third joyous moon.

Hail, chosen Type and Image true
Of JESUS on the Sea!
In slumber and in glory too,
Shadow'd of old by thee.
Save that in calmness thou didst sleep
The summer stream beside,
He on a wider wilder deep,
Where boding night-winds sigh'd:—

Sigh'd when at eve He laid Him down,
But with a sound like flame
At midnight from the mountain's crown
Upon His slumbers came.—
Lo, how they watch, till He awake,
Around His rude low bed:
How wistful count the waves that break
So near His sacred Head!

O faithless! know ye not of old
How in the western bay,
When dark and vast the billows roll'd,
A Prophet slumbering lay?
The surges smote the keel as fast
As thunderbolts from heaven:—
Himself into the wave he cast
And hope and life were given.

Behold, a mightier far is here;—
Nor will He spare to leap,
For the souls' sake He loves so dear,
Into a wilder deep.
E'en now He dreams of Calvary;
Soon will He wake and say
The words of peace and might: do ye
His hour in calmness stay.

5.

FIRST WAKING.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rhabboni; which is to say, Master."

"Ye who wait in wistful gaze
Where young infants lie,
Learning faith and silent praise
From each pure calm sigh,
Say, 'mid all those beaming glances,
Starts, and gleams, and silent trances,
When the fond heart highest dances,
Feeling Heaven so nigh?"

"Hard it is, 'mid gifts so sweet
Choosing out the prime:
But no brighter smiles we meet
Than at waking time,
When they burst the chains of slumber,
Chains that guard but not encumber,
And glad fancies without number
Ring their playful chime."

"Nay, but with a moaning sound
Babes awakening start;
See the uneasy eye glance round,
Feel the beating heart.
But the watcher's look prevailing
In a moment stills that wailing,
Eye and heart have ceas'd their ailing,
Joy hath learn'd her part."—

So when rose on Easter dawn
Our all-glorious Sun,
You might see Love's eye withdrawn
From th' adored One.
Tears that morn were in her waking,
Now again her heart is breaking;—
Who may soothe her soul's sad aching?
For her Lord is gone.

Him for tears she may not see,
Even her soul's delight,
Yet full near to her is He.—
Say, did Hosts of Light

Ever breathe in mortals' hearing
Tones so soft, so heavenly cheering?
"Mary," was the word endearing—
Heaven and earth grew bright.—

Lo, the babe spreads out his arms
Toward the watcher's face,
Fain to hide from sad alarms
In Love's safe embrace.—
See, the Word of Grace attending,
Magdalen full lowly bending.
"Touch Me not till Mine ascending,"
Is the Word of Grace.

Love with infant's haste would fain
Touch Him and adore,
But a deeper holier gain
Mercy keeps in store.
"Touch me not: awhile believe Me:
Touch Me not till heaven receive Me,
Then draw near and never leave Me,
Then I go no more."

6.

LOOKING WESTWARD.

"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts."

HAD I an infant, Lord, to rear
And mould in JESUS' Law,
How should I watch in hope and fear
The first deep glance of awe,

When for a bright and conscious gaze
He lifts his eyelids meek,
And round his own world's little maze
Some marvel fain would seek!

Bright be the spot, and pure the ray,
That wins his steadfast eye;
A path of light, a glorious way,
To guide his soul on high.

O, rich the tint of earthly gold,
And keen the diamond's spark,
But the young Lamb of Jesus' fold
Should other splendours mark.

To soothe him in the unquiet night
I ask no taper's gleam,
But bring him where aërial light
Falls from the Moon's soft beam.

His heart at early morn to store
With fancies fresh and rare,
Count not thy jewels o'er and o'er,
Shew him no mirror's glare,

But lift him where the Eastern heaven
Glows with the Sun unseen,
Where the strong wings, to morning given,
Brood o'er a world serene.

There let him breathe his matin thought
Of pure unconscious love,
There taste the dew by Angels brought
In silence from above.

Yet, might I choose a time, me seems
That earliest wistful gaze
Were best to meet the softening beams
Of sunset's glowing maze.

Wide be the western casement thrown
At sultry evening's fall,
The gorgeous lines be duly shown
That weave Heaven's wondrous pall.

Calm be his sleep, whose eyelids close
Upon so fair a sight:
Not gentler mother's music flows,
Her sweetest, best good night.

So hastes the Lord our hearts to fill
With calm baptismal grace,
Preventing all false gleams of ill
By His own glorious Face.

7.

UPWARD GAZING.

"And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."

"WHENCE is the mighty grace,
Mother of God, that thou to me shouldst come,
Me, who but fill a sinner's place,
A sinful child hid in my womb?
Who in God's sight am I,
And who mine unborn boy,
That I should view Heaven's Spouse so nigh,
He in my bosom leap for joy?"

O cry of deep delight
By Aaron's sainted daughter breath'd that hour!
O joy preventing life and light,
When th' Incarnate in His Power

Came to th' Unborn! even now
Your echo faint we feel,
When o'er the newly sealèd brow
Glad airs and gleams of summer steal.

Oft as in sunbright dawn
The infant lifts his eye, joying to find
The dusky veil of sleep undrawn,
And to the East gives welcome kind:
Or in the morning air
Waves high his little arm,
As though he read engraven there
His fontal name, Christ's saving charm:

Oft as in hope untold
The parent's eye pursues that eager look,
Enkindling like the shafts of old,
Where mid the stars their way they took[c]:
Still in Love's steady gaze,
In Joy's unbidden cry,
That holy mother's glad amaze,
That infant's worship, we descry.

[c] Vir. Æn. v. 525.

Still Mary's Child unseen
Comes breathing, in the heart just seal'd His own,
Prayers of high hope: what bliss they mean,
And where they soar, to Him is known!—
But, joyous Mothers, mark,
And mark, exulting Sires,
All who the pure baptismal spark
Would duteous nurse to saintly fires:

Stern is the Babe, and lone:
Vow'd from his birth, unborn he seals the vow,
And ere he win his glory-throne,
Vigil and fast his frame must bow,
And hours of prayer, apart
From Home's too soothing praise;—
His Saviour's image in his heart
Increasing while his own decays.

8.

CHILDREN'S THANKFULNESS.

"A joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful."

Why so stately, Maiden fair,
Rising in thy nurse's arms
With that condescending air;
Gathering up thy queenly charms,
Like some gorgeous Indian bird,
Which, when at eve the balmy copse is stirr'd,
Turns the glowing neck, to chide
Th' irreverent foot-fall, then makes haste to hide
Again its lustre deep
Under the purple wing, best home of downy sleep?

Not as yet she comprehends
How the tongues of men reprove,
But a spirit o'er her bends
Train'd in Heaven to courteous love,
And with wondering grave rebuke
Tempers, to-day, shy tone and bashful look.—

Graceless one, 'tis all of thee,
Who for her maiden bounty, full and free,
The violet from her gay
And guileless bosom, didst no word of thanks repay.

Therefore, lo, she opens wide
Both her blue and wistful eyes,—
Breathes her grateful chant, to chide
Our too tardy sympathies.
Little Babes and Angels bright—
They muse, be sure, and wonder, day and night,
How th' all-holy Hand should give,
The sinner's hand in thanklessness receive.
We see it and we hear,
But wonder not: for why? we feel it all too near.

Not in vain, when feasts are spread,
To the youngest at the board[d]
Call we to incline the head,
And pronounce the solemn word.
Not in vain they clasp and raise
The soft pure fingers in unconscious praise,

[d] See Hooker, E. P. v. 31, 2.

Taught perchance by pictur'd wall
How little ones before the Lord may fall,
How to His lov'd caress
Reach out the restless arm, and near and nearer press.

Children in their joyous ranks,
As you pace the village street,
Fill the air with smiles and thanks
If but once one babe you greet.
Never weary, never dim,
From Thrones Seraphic mounts th' eternal hymn.
Babes and Angels grudge no praise:—
But elder souls, to whom His saving ways
Are open, fearless take
Their portion, hear the Grace, and no meek answer make.

Save our blessings, Master, save
From the blight of thankless eye:
Teach us for all joys to crave
Benediction pure and high,
Own them given, endure them gone,
Shrink from their hardening touch, yet prize them won.

Prize them as rich odours, meet
For Love to lavish on His Sacred Feet;—
Prize them as sparkles bright
Of heavenly dew, from yon o'erflowing well of light:

9.

CHILDREN WITH DUMB CREATURES.

"The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den."

THOU mak'st me jealous, Infant dear;
Why wilt thou waste thy precious smiles,
Thy beckonings blithe, and joyous wiles,
On bird or insect gliding near?
Why court the deaf and blind?
What is this wondrous sympathy,
That draws thee so, heart, ear, and eye,
Towards the inferior kind?

We tempt thee much to look and sing,—
Thy mimic notes are rather drawn
From feather'd playmates on the lawn.
The quivering moth or bee's soft wing,

Brushing the window pane,
Will reach thee in thy dreamy trance,
When nurses' skill for one bright glance
Hath toil'd an hour in vain.

And as thou hold'st the creatures dear,
So are they fain on thee to wait.
Bloodhounds at thy caress abate
Their bayings wild; yea without fear
Thou dalliest in the lair
Of watch-dog stern; thy mother's eye
Shrinks not to see thee slumbering lie
Beneath his duteous care.

The war-horse treads full soft, they say,
If in his path a babe he see.
The tiger's whelp, encaged with thee,
Would sheathe his claws, to sport and play.
Bees have for thee no sting:—
They love thy trusting heart too well,
That mightier guard than fairy spell
Of old, or magic ring.

Oh, who the secret powers hath trac'd,
That in such league mysterious bind
The gentlest with the fiercest kind,
The sheepfold with the howling waste?
Is it, that each and all
The living sympathize with life?—
That sudden movements, though in strife,
The entrancèd thought recall?

He whom the burning East hath bred,
Wizard or sage, in day-dreams wild,
Might say, "Dim memories haunt the child,
Of lives in other beings led,
Other, and yet the same.
Nor less an instinct true, though blind,
Dwells in the soul of meaner kind,
Spark of past hope or shame."

Nay, call it recollection deep
Of Eden bowers,—high purity
Beaming around from brow or eye
Of infants, waking or asleep:—

As in old time, we read,
The royal lion bending low
Did Una's virgin-glory know,
Her guardian prove in need.

Of homage paid in Paradise
To Adam, guileless then and pure,
The broken dream may yet endure
Within them—visions vague arise
Of a Superior Power,
Discern'd by form erect, and mien
Commanding, and calm purpose, seen
In eyes that smile or lower.

Thus tender babes and beasts of prey
May silently each other mind
Of the old League: "Let man be kind
And true, so all must him obey."
Thus giants of the wood,
Wild elephant or mountain bull,
Beneath some quiet stripling's rule
Stand quailing and subdued.

Who knows but here, in mercy lent,
A gleam preventing heaven we see,
A token of Love's victory
In a sweet awful Sacrament?
Hearts fallen and sin-born,
Oh, why are ye so fondly stirr'd?
For bounding lamb or lonely bird
Why should ye joy or mourn?

Ah, you have been in JESUS' arms,
The holy Fount hath you imbued
With His all-healing kindly Blood,
And somewhat of His pastoral charms,
And care for His lost sheep,
Ye there have learn'd: in order'd tones
Gently to soothe the losser ones,
And watch their noon-day sleep.

Lo, far and wide the Love o'erflows,
The Love that to your souls He gave
In the regenerating wave;—
Both man and beast His mercy knows:—

Nor from His pattern swerve
His children, tending lamb or dove :—
But aye the choice of all your love
Ye for His Least reserve.

To point the way where they should go,
By word and gesture, o'er and o'er,
Teach them untir'd all courteous lore,
Hear their first prayers, so meek and low :—
These are your arts : by these
Ye in the fold your task fulfil,
And the Good Shepherd on the hill
From far approving sees.

10.

LIFTING UP TO THE CROSS.

"But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able."

Oft have I read of sunny realms, where skies are pure at even,
And sight goes deep in lucid air, and earth seems nearer Heaven,
And wheresoe'er you lift your eyes, the Holy Cross, they say,
Stands guardian of your journey, by lone or crowded way;
And I have mus'd how awfully its shadows and its gleams
Might haply fall on infants' eyes, and mingle with their dreams,
And draw them up by silent power of its o'ershading arm,
And deepen on the tender brow Christ's seal and saintly charm.

Oft have I read, and dream'd, and now behold a token true!
A maiden from a distant isle, where Faith is fresh of hue,—
Where Memory tarries, to reprove our cold irreverent age,
In churches set like stars around some saintly hermitage;—
Where old Devotion lingers beside the granite Cross,
And pilgrims seek the healing well, far over moor and moss,—
A noble-hearted maiden, from a believing shore,
Is by, to see Christ's little ones Him crucified adore.

Upon a verdant hillock the sacred sign appears,
A damsel on no trembling arm an eager babe uprears,
With a sister's yearning love, and an elder sister's pride,
She lifts the new-baptiz'd, to greet the Friend who for him died [e]

[e] A traveller from Ireland witnessed this scene on the Continent, and described it to the Author.

Who may the maiden's thought divine, performing
thus in sight
Of all the heavenly Watchers her pure unbidden rite?
While fearless to those awful Lips her treasure she
would raise,
I see her features shrink, as though she fain would
downward gaze.

Perchance a breath of self-reproach is fluttering round
her heart:—
"Thou, darling, in our Saviour mayst for certain claim
thy part:
The dews baptismal bright and keen are glistening on
thy brow,
He cannot choose but own thee, in His arms receiv'd
e'en now.
But much I've sinn'd and little wept: will He not say,
'Begone?'.
I dare not meet His searching eye; my penance is
undone.
But thou and thy good Angel, who nerves mine arm
to bear
And lift thee up so near Him, will strive for me in
prayer."

Or chanc'd the Thorny Crown her first upseeking
glance to win,
And the deep lines of agony trac'd by the whole
world's sin?
Oh, deeply in her bosom went the thought, "Who
draw so nigh
Unto those awful Lips, and share the Lord's departing
sigh,—
Who knoweth what mysterious pledge upon their souls
is bound,
To copy in their own hearts' blood each keen and bitter
Wound?
If of the dying JESUS we the Kiss of Peace receive,
How but in daily dying thenceforward dare we live?

"And was it meet, thou tender flower, on thy young
life to lay
Such burden, pledging thee to vows thou never canst
unsay?
What if the martyrs' fire some day thy dainty limbs
devour?
What if beneath the scourge they writhe, or in dull
famine cower?

What if thou bear the cross within, all aching and decay?—
And 'twas I that laid it on thee:—what if thou fall away?"
Such is Love's deep misgiving, when, stronger far than Faith,
She brings her earthly darlings to the Cross for life or death.

O, be Thou present in that hour, high Comforter, to lead
Her memory to th' eternal Law, by the great King decreed,
What time the highly favour'd one who on His bosom lay,
And he who of the chosen twelve first trode the martyrs' way,
Taught by their mother, crav'd the boon next to Thy throne to be,
For her dreams were of the Glory, but the Cross she could not see.
O well for that fond mother, well for her belov'd, that they,
When th' hour His secret meaning told, did by their promise stay.

"Thy baptism and Thy cup be ours: for both our hearts are strong."
Learn it, ye babes, at matin prime, repeat it all day long.
Even as the mother's morning kiss is token of delight
Through all the merry hours of day, and at fall of dewy night
Her evening kiss shall to her babe the softest slumbers seal,
So Thy first greeting life imparts, Thy last shall cheer and heal.—
Then, maiden, trust thy nurslíng here; thou wilt not choose amiss
For his sweet soul; here let him dwell; here is the gate of bliss.

Three Saints of old their lips upon the Incarnate Saviour laid,
And each with death or agony for the high rapture paid.
His Mother's holy kisses of the coming sword gave sign,
And Simeon's hymn full closely did with his last breath entwine;

And Magdalen's first tearful touch prepar'd her but
to greet
With homage of a broken heart His pierc'd and lifeless
feet.—
Then courage, duteous maiden; the nails and bleeding
brows,
The pale and dying lips, are the portion of the Spouse.

11.

SICKNESS IN THE CRADLE.

"They brought young children to Christ, that He should touch them."

"A CHRISTIAN child in pain!
O sad amazing thought!
A babe elect and born again,
With blood of JESUS bought;
That never yet knew dream of sin,
Nor throb of pride, nor will unclean;
Yet faint with fever see him lie,
Or in strong grasp of sinners' agony!"

O, mother fond and wild,
Stay the complaining word!
What wouldst thou have? Thy suffering child
Is as his Saviour Lord.
Or ever eight brief days have flown,
He, the unstain'd, must make His moan.
Must taste the sacrificial knife,
Must to the Cross devote the tender life.

Behold, the Virgin blest
Calls on her Babe to wake
From His sweet slumber on her breast;
How should her heart not ache?
From her pure bosom, where all night
He softly slept, that Maiden bright
Resigns her Well-belov'd at morn
To shed His blood; for therefore was He born.

Pierc'd is her heart, yet still:
For why? that Mother's love
Is one with His Almighty will,
Chang'd by the o'ershadowing Dove.
O freely then your treasures yield,
With the dread Cross so lately seal'd,
Yield to the chastenings of th' Unseen,
The Saviour's Presence-tokens, sweet as keen.

12.

ANTICIPATION AND RETROSPECTION.

"And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

A FRAGMENT of a rainbow bright
Through the moist air I see,
All dark and damp on yonder height,
All clear and gay to me.

An hour ago the storm was here,
The gleam was far behind.
So will our joys and griefs appear
When earth has ceas'd to blind.

Grief will be joy, if on its edge
Fall soft that holiest ray:
Joy will be grief, if no faint pledge
Be there of heavenly day.

Christ's Passion eve fell dark and drear
  Upon His faithful few,
But brighter, each returning year,
  In memory gleam'd anew.

And loud the chant of hope and glee
  O'er Adam's eldest born,
But, hapless mother, who like thee
  Her travail pangs might mourn?

13.

JUDAS'S INFANCY.

"The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."

Alas! that e'er the pangs of birth,
The consecrated throes, whereby
Eden revives, should breed on earth
Untemper'd agony!

Yet sure as frail repenting Eve
For pardon knelt of yore, and now
Adoring kneels there to receive,
Where all the world shall bow,

From fruit of her own favour'd womb,
The peace, the home, her wandering lost:—
Sure as to blessèd Mary come
The Saints' and Martyrs' host,

To own, with many a thankful strain,
The channel of undying bliss,
The bosom where the Lord hath lain,
The hand that held by His;—

Sure as her form for evermore
The glory and the joy shall wear,
That rob'd her, bending to adore
The Babe her chaste womb bare;—

So surely throes unblest have been,
And cradles where no kindly star
Look'd down—no Angel's eye serene,
To gleam through years afar.

Did not our Lord speak out His ban,
The Christ for His betrayer mourn?
"Alas! good were it for that man
If he had ne'er been born."

Nor may we doubt, His Mother mild
Upon that bosom pitying thought,
Where Judas lay, a harmless Child,
By gold as yet unbought.

But Time, as holy sages sing,
When earth and sin have waxèd old,
A direr progeny will bring,
The last foe of the fold.

Of mortal seed, of woman bred,
The Antichrist, they write, will be,
From a soft bosom duly fed,
Rock'd on a loving knee.

High grace at first to Judas came—
Who knows but he, the Man of Sin,
In the baptismal wave and flame
May his dread course begin?

O ye who wait with hearts too light
By Font or cradle, fear in time!
O let not all your dreams be bright,
Here in Earth's wayward clime!

From the foul dew, the blighting air,
Watch well your treasure newly won.
Heaven's child and yours, uncharm'd by prayer,
May prove Perdition's son.

14.

THE SAINTS' INFANCY.

"And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an Angel."

WHERE is the brow to bear in mortals' sight
The Crown of pure angelic Light?
And where the favour'd eye
Through the dim air the radiance to descry?
An infant on its mother smiling,
Wash'd from the world and sin's defiling,
And to Faith's arm restor'd, while yet
With the blest dew its cheeks are wet:—
There Christ hath sworn seraphic Light shall be,
There eyes, the Light to see.

He who vouchsaf'd to kindle that pure glow
Will feed it day and night, we know,
By duteous fear of sin
Fann'd into flame the virgin heart within,

Till once again at Angels' warning
Heaven-gates shall part as clouds of morning,
And the confirming Spirit pour
His glory where young hearts adore:
There is Heaven's Light; there, if true Pastors be,
Are eyes, the Light to see.

And what if there some favour'd one should kneel,
Whom in His time the Lord will seal,
High in the Mount to draw
Light uncorrupt from His pure fontal Law,
Then 'mid his brethren bear unknowing
The lustre keen within him glowing,
But veil it, when he feels their gaze,
As Moses veil'd the Sinai rays?—
Blest, who so shines: and blest the thoughtful few,
Who see that brightness true.

Wouldst thou the tide of grace should higher flow,
The angelic ray more glorious show?
Wait for His trial hour,
His willing Saints in His dread day of Power.

Ever as earth's wild war-cries heighten,
The Cross upon the brow will brighten,
Till on the very scorner's gaze
Break forth the Heaven-reflecting rays,
Strange awful charms the unwilling eye compel
On the Saints' Light to dwell.

Yes—strive, thou world, in thy rash tyrant-mood,
To slake that burning Cross in blood:—
It will but brighter burn,
As martyrs' eyes near and more near discern
Where on the Father's right hand beaming,
Light upon Light in glory streaming,
The Saviour, felt, not seen, in life,
Deigns to be seen in that last strife,
And Angels hail, approaching to the shore,
Rays like their own, and more.

Who knows but maiden mild or smiling boy,
Our own entrusted care and joy,
By His electing grace
May with His martyrs find their glorious place?

O hope, for prayer too bold and thrilling,
O bliss, to aid its high fulfilling!
O woe and wrong, O tenfold shame,
To mar or damp the angelic flame!
To draw His soldiers backward from the Cross!
Woe and eternal loss!

15.

THE CRADLE GUARDED.

"Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."
"As therefore the tares are gathered, and burned in fire, so shall it be in the end of this world."

THE Lord, th' All-gracious, hides not all His Ire:
Through the dim chinks of this decaying earth
Gleams ever and anon th' unwasted fire,
Startling rude eyes, and shaming lawless mirth.

Even in the joy of Harvest, see, His Brand
Over the chaff is kindling; sheaves for food
And tares for fire, He binds in equal band.
At vintage time His robes are roll'd in blood.

His Angels and His Saints cry out, How long?
His Little ones, full keenly are they bent
To right the fallen and redress the wrong,
Full eagerly to justice run unsent.

These are Thy tokens, all-redeeming Lord!
Where, but of Thee, learn'd we aright to name
The last dire prison? Thine the dismal word,
Thine the undying worm, th' unquenchèd flame.

Therefore Thy duteous Spouse, our Mother dear,
Tuning her love-notes to the Father's voice,
Is fain to breathe grave warnings in deep fear
And say to Sin, Hell is thine hopeless choice!

The strain Love taught her, she in love repeats.—
Call it not hard, if in each holiest hour,
When with unwonted joy her King she greets,
With His own threatenings she would fence His bower.

Call it not stern, though to her Babes she show
The smoke aye glaring o'er th' abode of ill;
Though guileless hearts, even in their vernal glow,
Hear now and then her thunders, and are still.

Might the calm smile, that on the infant's brow
So brightly beams, all its deep meaning tell,
Would it not say, "For Love's sweet sake allow
Fear's chastening Angel here with me to dwell?

Was not the purchase of my quiet bliss
A life-long anguish and a Cross of woe?
O! much I fear the mountain-path to miss,
If from my sight I lose the gulf below."

Such lesson learn we by the cradle's side,
Nor other teach dark hills and valleys deep:
Where rude rocks fiercest frown, and waters chide,
'Tis but to guard the green mead's lowly sleep.—

There is a peak—the raven loves it well,
And all the mists of neighbouring ocean love,—
Which if you climb, what seem'd a pinnacle
Proves as a wide sea-beach where cormorants rove.

Rocks shower'd at random, as by giant hands,
Strew the rude terrace:—heedful be his eye,
And firm his step, who on the dark edge stands
Beneath the cloud, and downward dares espy.

"What seest thou there?" A thousand feet below,
And further on, far as the mists that sweep
Around me suffer, dimly trac'd in snow,
Pale forms I see, reclining on the steep.

Each in his drear ravine, where never ray
  Even from the cold north-east in June might fall,
They sleep in silence till th' appointed Day,
  Nor heed the eagle's scream, the whirlwind's call.

The wastes of vapour, veering round, now hide
  And now reveal the watchers dark and vast,
Which by each awful resting-place abide,—
  Grim towering crags:—who there his eye shall cast,

With aught of sin's sad burthen on his soul,
  Feels he not like a powerless child forlorn,
Over a gulf where flaming billows roll
  By a strong outstretch'd Arm as yet upborne?

O surely then to his heart's deep is brought
  The prayer, the vow, there evermore to cling,
And sickening turn from the wild haunting thought,
  "What if at once o'er the dread verge I spring?"

Retiring, sure he to a warning Voice
  Will time his footsteps, on a true Arm lean:
What happy vale soe'er may crown his choice,
  That awful gulf, those rocks will be its screen.

Lo, nestling at the mountain's further base,
And guarded by its terrors, a soft glen!
Its waters run a golden gladsome race,
Its windings hide meet homes for pastoral men.

Lord, if in such calm bowers a rest Thou give,
We pray Thee, crown Thy gift with Fear, that we
May in the shadow of Thy judgments live,
The wrath o'ertake us on our bended knee.

III.

Early Encouragements.

1.

TRUSTWORTHINESS.

"The child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem."

The cares, the loves of parents fond
Go deep, all loves, all cares beyond.
Fain would they read the good and ill
That nestles in our silent will,
And night and day
They wish and pray
That only good may there find way.

But deeper lurk all breasts within
The secrets both of grace and sin.
Each has his world of thought alone,
To one dread Watcher only known.
And far and wide
On every side
Our dreams dart on—no earthly guide.

Glad may they be and calm of heart,
Who, when their child so walks apart,
Seek him and find where Angels come
On JESUS' work, in JESUS' Home:—
Who, out of sight,
Know all is right,
One law for darkness and for light.

If in pure aims and deeds and prayers
His path mount high, and far from theirs,
If seeking him 'mid friends below
They find him not, what joy to know
He hath but turn'd
Where JESUS yearn'd
To be;—where heavenly Love is learn'd!

Thou who didst teach Thy Mother dear,
In three dim days of doubt and fear,
By timely training to foreknow
Thy Passion and its three days' woe,
Prepare Thou still
Our heart and will,—
Our friends' and ours,—for good and ill.

2.

SAMUEL'S PRAYER.

"Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength."

With joy the guardian Angel sees
A duteous child upon his knees,
And writes in his approving book
Each upward, earnest, holy look.

Light from his pure aërial dream
He springs to meet morn's orient beam,
And pours towards the kindling skies
His clear adoring melodies.

Some glorious Seraph, waiting by,
Receives the prayer to waft on high,
And wonders, as he soars, to read
More than we know, and all we need.

More than we know, and all we need,
Is in young children's prayer and creed.
They, for their Home, before Him fall,
He, for His Church, receives their call.

They cry with simple voice and clear,
"Bless Father, Mother, Brethren dear:"
He for the Priests of His dread Son
Accounts the blessing ask'd and won.

For holy Priests and Matrons mild,
For penitents and undefil'd,
For dying Saints, for babes new-born,
He takes their offering, eve and morn.

He gives the frail and feeble tongue
A doom to speak on sin and wrong;
Unconscious they stern lightnings aim,
When His ten Precepts they proclaim.

Thus in the Tabernacle shade
At morn and eve young Samuel pray'd,
Nor knew his prayer God's ark would win,
Forfeit by priest's and people's sin.

To Eli thus dread words he spake:—
Ye hearts profane, with penance ache;—
A wondrous peal o'er Israel rung,
Heaven's thunder from a child's meek tongue.

3.

PRAYER AT HOME AND IN CHURCH.

"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the Mother of JESUS, and with His brethren."

WHERE are the homes of Paschal Mirth,
The bowers where heavenly Joy may rest her wings on earth,
And at her leisure gaze adoring
Where out of sight the golden clouds are soaring
Beneath the ascending Saviour's Feet?
Where may rejoicing Love retreat
To frame a melody for His returning meet?

Two homes we know of Love's resort,
One in the upper room, one in the Temple court;
In glorious Sion both, possessing
Alike her presence, whom the awful blessing
Lifted above all Adam's race:—
The royal Twelve are there in place;
Women and duteous friends, awaiting His high grace.

Two homes for us His Love hath found,
One by our quiet couch and one on holy ground.
There in due season meekly kneeling
Learn we our lesson ere His last revealing.
The Mother of our Lord is there,
And Saints are breathing hallow'd air,
Living and dead, to waft on high our feeble prayer.

And with His Mother and His Saints
He watches by, who loves the prayer that never faints.
Avaunt, ill thoughts and thoughts of folly!
Where christen'd infants sport, that floor is holy:
Holier the station where they bow,
Adoring Him with daily vow,
Till He with ampler grace their youthful hearts endow.

4.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

"And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

"WHAT wouldst Thou have me do, O Lord?"
Darkling he spoke and lowly laid,
With all his heart he spake the word,
The awful Voice mild answer made:
"Go, seek one out who thee may bring
Where healing, holy waters spring,
Then will I shew thee speedily
What burthen thou must bear for Me."

"What wouldst Thou have me do, O Lord?"
Each morn and eve we seem to say,
And He gives back no doubtful word:
"Remember, little child, all day,
Thine early vows, the hallow'd wave
Where JESUS first His blessing gave:
There stoop, there cleanse thee every hour:
Christ's Laver hath refreshing power."

"What wouldst Thou have me do, O Lord?"
Rise, little child, and onward go,
Where Saints are met with one accord
The praises of high God to show.
In meekness learn their prayer and song,
Do as they do, and thou ere long
Shalt see the wonders they behold
In heavenly books and creeds of old.

"What wouldst Thou have me do, O Lord?"
So whispering, Saul with prostrate brow
The persecuted One ador'd,
So breath'd his earliest Christian vow.
Stern the reply:—to fast alone,
And in the darkness make his moan.
Thrice set and rose the weary day,
Ere with the Christians he might pray.

"What wouldst Thou have me do, O Lord?"
Think, little child; thy conscience try,
Rebellious deed and idle word,
And selfish thought and envious eye:—

Hast thou no mark of these? and yet
Full in thy sight His Law was set.
O, if He joy'd the Cross to bear,
With patience take thy little share.

5.

CONFESSION.

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden."

Didst thou not hear how soft the day-wind sigh'd,
How from afar that sweeping breath it drew,
Wav'd the light rustling branches far and wide,
Then died away, then rose and moan'd anew?

Sure if aright our morning prayers were said,
We in those tones the Almighty's unseen walk
Shall hear, nor vainly shun the Presence dread,
Which comes in mercy with our souls to talk.

"Where art thou, child of earth?" He seems to say,
"Why hide so deep from Love's all-seeing eye?"—
"I heard and fear'd, for I have sinn'd to-day."—
"What? know'st thou not the Almighty One was by?

"Think'st thou to lurk in yonder wavering boughs,
Where even these earthly sunbeams glide and steal?
Nay, speed thee forth while yet high grace allows,
Lay bare thy wounds to Him who waits to heal.

"They only rankle in th' unwholesome shade;
But sun and air have soothing power, and He
Yearns to forgive, when hearts are lowly laid.
Even now behold His robe prepar'd for thee.

"These fluttering leaves the more unveil thy shame.
Fall humbly down, and hide thine eyes in dust:
He will upraise thee, for His own great Name;
His penance garb will make and shew thee just."

6.

TELL THY MOTHER.

"Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels."

WEARY soul and burthen'd sore,
Labouring with thy secret load,
Fear not all thy grief to pour
In this heart, true Love's abode.

Think not all is hidden quite:
Mothers' ears are keen to hear,
Mothers' eyes are quick as light,
Glancing wide and watching near.

I with boding anguish read
Half your tale ere ye begin:
Bitter drops in heart I bleed,
Penance for your shame and sin.

Grudge not thou thine eyes to hide
On this breast that aches for thee:
Patient, kneeling, here abide
Till th' absolving Voice is free.

I from thy baptismal hour
Yearn for thee, hard heart and dry:
Seek my penitential bower,
In the dust beside me lie.

7.

ABSOLUTION.

"Whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven."

Live ever in my heart, sweet awful hour,
When prostrate in my sin and shame I lay,
And heard the absolving accents fall with power,
As soft, as keen, as lambent lightnings play.

And sure with lightning glance they seem'd to thrill,
(O may the dream prove true!) and search and burn
Each foul dark corner of my lawless will.
What if the Spirit griev'd did then return?—

O fear, O joy to think!—and what if yet,
In some far moment of eternity,
The lore of evil I may quite forget,
And with the pure in heart my portion be?

Live in my heart, dread blissful hope, to tame
The haughty brow, to curb the unchasten'd eye,
And shape to deeds of good each wavering aim;
O teach me some true penance ere I die!

8.

HOURS OF PRAYER.

"Evening, and morning, and at noonday will I pray."

Down, slothful heart! how dar'st thou say,
"Call not so oft to pray?"
Behold, the Lord's own bounteous showers
Keep their appointed hours.
The forenoon saw the Spirit first
On orphan'd Saints in glory burst;
At noontide hour Saint Peter saw
The sheet let down, heavenward all earth to draw;
At eventide, when good Cornelius kneel'd
Upon his fasting day, an Angel shone reveal'd.

Untir'd is He in mercy's task,
Then tire not thou to ask.
He says not, "Yesterday I gave,
Wilt thou for ever crave?"

He every moment waits to give,
Watch thou unwearied to receive.
Thine Hours of prayer, upon the Cross
To Him were hours of woe, and shame and loss;
Scourging at morn; at noon, pierc'd hands and feet;
At eve, fierce pains of death, for thee He counted sweet.

The blue sky o'er the green earth bends,
All night the dew descends:
The green earth to the blue heaven's ray
Its bosom spreads all day.
Earth answers heaven: the holy race
Should answer His unfailing grace.
Then smile, low world, in spite or scorn,
We to our God will kneel ere prime of morn;
The third, the sixth, the ninth—each Passion hour,—
We with high praise will keep, as He with gifts of power.

9.

REPEATING THE CREED.

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

MANY the banners bright and fair,
Uplifted in the gleaming sky,
When faith would shew this lower air
The token of her victory.

The heaven-enlighten'd eye and mind,
By meek confession purified,
Gazes on high, nor fails to find
Which way the signs celestial guide.

One bodies forth a Virgin form,
Holding aloft a Cross of might,
And watching, how through cloud and storm
Its head is lost in deepening light.

Another dreams, by night and day,
Of a calm Prophet's face, intent
To hear what God the Lord shall say,
Ere the dread tones be gone and spent.

An Eagle from the deep of space
Is hovering near, and hastes to bring
(Meetest the unearthly tale to trace,)
A plume of his mysterious wing.

A golden Chalice standing by,—
What mantles there is life or death;
A Dragon to the unpurgèd eye,
A Serpent from the Cross, to Faith.

O visions dread and bright, I feel
You are too high for me, I seek
A lowlier impress for my seal,
More of this earth, though pure and meek.

Give me a tender spotless child,
Rehearsing or at eve or morn
His chant of glory undefil'd,
The Creed that with the Church was born.

Down be his earnest forehead cast,
His slender fingers join'd for prayer,
With half a frown his eye seal'd fast
Against the world's intruding glare.

Who, while his lips so gently move,
And all his look is purpose strong,
Can say what wonders, wrought above,
Upon his unstain'd fancy throng?

The world new-fram'd, the Christ new-born,
The Mother-Maid, the cross and grave,
The rising sun on Easter morn,
The fiery tongues sent down to save,—

The gathering Church, the Fount of Life,
The saints and mourners kneeling round,
The Day to end the body's strife,
The Saviour in His people crown'd,—

All in majestic march and even
To the veil'd eye by turns appear,
True to their time as stars in heaven,
No morning dream so still and clear.

And this is Faith, and thus she wins
Her victory, day by day rehears'd.
Seal but thine eye to pleasant sins,
Love's glorious world will on thee burst.

10.

LESSONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

(For St. Luke's Day.)

"There is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

MOTHER of Christ's children dear,
Teacher true of loving Fear,
Kind Physician, wakeful Nurse,
Wont with many a potent verse
By our cradles watch to keep,
Singing new-born Saints to sleep;
Be thy tenderest breath to-day
Breath'd on all we sing or say.
For to-day that Saint we own,
Who to JESUS' cradle-throne
Led us first, with shepherds mild,
With that Mother undefil'd,
There to adore the wondrous Child.

Spouse of Christ, so pure and bright,
Skill'd, by His unearthly light,
In our coarse dim air to trace
Lines and hues from yon high place,

Gathering tones from earth and sky
For His perfect harmony:—
As to-day thou guid'st our thought
Where that holy Painter wrought,
Who with pen and pencil true
Christ's own awful Mother drew;
Be thy prayer untir'd and strong,
That when eager fancies throng,
Pure may be our dream and song.

Watcher of the eternal ways,
Trusted with the Saints' high praise,
Oft as o'er our childish trance
History bids her visions glance,—
Wonders wild in airy measures,
Records grave from Memory's treasures,—
Guide thou well the heart-winning line,
May our love and hate be thine.
He whose tongue of JESUS told
On His Cross and in His Fold,
Third of the mysterious Four,—
Learn we all his sacred lore,
Listening at the Kingdom's door.

11.

UNWEARIED LOVE.

"Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven."

My child, the counsels high attend
Of thine Eternal Friend.
When longings pure, when holy prayers,
When self-denying thoughts and cares
Room in thine heart would win,
Stay not too long to count them o'er;
Rise in His Name; throw wide the door,
Let the good Angels in:

Nor listen, should the Tempter say,
"How wearying, day by day,
To say the prayer we said before,
The mountain path climb o'er and o'er,

No end to warfare find!"
Nor seek thou, limit to discern
In patient woe, in duty stern,
But learn thy Mother's mind.

She will not tire on thee to wait
In early hour or late:
To-morrow even as yesterday,
Still onward, onward in Love's way
To speed, her only dream.
So many love-deeds done, to cease
Her kindly toil, and rest in peace,
Small joy to her would seem.

And He, the Fountain of her Love,—
His treasure-house above
Is open, day and night, with store
Of healing for our daily sore,
With grace to mourners given,
O'er-powering, by the tide of tears,
All that from old abhorrèd years
Remains of wasting leaven.

He pardoning wearies not. Ah why
  Behold with evil eye
Thy brother asking grace for sin?
He doth but aid thee, more to win
  Of hope in thy last end.
In heart forgive—that pays Him all:
But grudging souls must die in thrall,
  No Saviour and no Friend.

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IV.

Early Warnings.

1.

EFFECT OF EXAMPLE.

"For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

Five loving souls, each one as mine,
And each for evermore to be!
Each deed of each to thrill
For good or ill
Along thine awful line,
Eternity!

Who for such burthen may suffice?
Who bear to think, how scornful tone,
Or word or glance too bold,
Or ill dream told,
May bar from Paradise
Our Master's own?

We scatter seeds with careless hand,
And dream we ne'er shall see them more:
But for a thousand years
Their fruit appears,
In weeds that mar the land,
Or healthful store.

The deeds we do, the words we say,—
Into still air they seem to fleet,
We count them ever past;
But they shall last,
In the dread judgment they
And we shall meet.

I charge thee by the years gone by,
For the love's sake of brethren dear,
Keep thou the one true way
In work and play,
Lest in that world their cry
Of woe thou hear!

2.

PRESUMPTION.

"Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"

Dear Child, to thee the tale is told
Of him who robb'd the poor man's fold.
Thou listenest, and with scorn and ire
Thy quivering brow is all on fire.
Thou think'st, O never sure on me
So foul a blot shall Angels see.
For joy thou hold'st thine eager breath
To hear him doom'd;—he dies the death.

But mark, young David was as thou,
A generous boy with open brow.
With heart as pure as mountain air
He caroll'd to his fleecy care:

With motion free as mountain cloud
He trode where mists the moorland shroud,
From bear and lion tore the prey,
Nor deem'd he e'er should rend as they.

Such was his dawn: but O! how grieve
Good Angels o'er his noon and eve!
He that with oil of joy began
In sackcloth ends, a fallen man.
Then wherefore trust youth's eager thought?
Wait till thine arm all day hath wrought:
Wait humbly till thy matin psalm
Due cadence find in evening calm.

3.

DANGER OF PRAISE.

"And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ."

When mortals praise thee, hide thine eyes,
Nor in thy Master's wrong
Take to thyself His crown and prize;
Yet more in heart than tongue.

None holier than the Desert Priest
Beneath the Law's dim sky,
Yet in Heaven's kingdom with the least,
We read, he might not vie.

No member, yet, of Christ the Son,
No gospel Prophet he;
Only a voice from out the Throne
Of dread yet blest decree.

If he confess'd, nor dar'd deny,
Woe to that Christian's heart,
Who in man's praise would walk on high,
And steal his Saviour's part!

And ah! to him what tenfold woe,
Who hides so well his sin,
Through earth he seems a saint to go,
Yet dies impure within!

Pray we our Lord, one pang to send
Of deep remorseful fear
For every smile of partial friend.—
Praise be our Penance here!

4.

ENVY.

"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

WHAT is this cloud upon thy brow?
"The Lord accepts my brother's vow,
But turns no ear to mine.
High in the liquid heaven behold
His altar-flames in many an airy fold,
But where I kneel, the Almighty makes no sign."

Yes: welcome to the pure bright air,
And dear to Angels, is his prayer,
For the sweet fragrance' sake
Of loving deeds: bring thou the same,
Thine altar too shall feel the gracious flame:
Haste, ere the monster at thy door awake.

Beside thine hearth, thine home within,
Lies couch'd and still a deadly sin,
O chain it while 'tis time.
Learn on thy brother's joy to gaze
With thankful eye; and heaven's high counsel praise,
That crown'd him with the forfeit of thy crime.

Thy forehead yet awhile must bear
His wrathful mark; but alms and prayer,
And penance true and stern,
May wear it out: thine evil eye
May melt in dews of holy charity,
Thy sullen tones to meek confessions turn.

5.

MISTRUST OF ELDERS.

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

When holy books, when loving friends,
When parents grave and kind
Tell of the peace the Almighty sends
On the pure heart and mind,—

When they, on whom our souls should lean,
The wondrous joy declare,
How to God's Altar they have been
And found their Saviour there,—

Alas! too often, worldly wise,
We scorn what they reveal,
We will not see with others' eyes,
Ourselves would touch and feel.

Thus many a precious day, month, year,
The blessing we delay:
It comes at last with sadden'd cheer,
He justly dims His ray.

Seven days, we read, a Saint of old
Dream'd on in doubt alone:
Seven days of hope and joy untold
For evermore were gone.

And when at last the all-gracious Lord
Vouchsaf'd the awful sign,
Made answer to his secret word
And shew'd the Wounds divine,

Even with that light of love there came
A soft yet warning cloud,
A shade of pity more than blame:—
"Behold thy prayer allowed.

My glorious Wounds I shew to thee,
Even here in earth's dull light;
But happier they, who wait to see,
Till heaven has purg'd their sight."

Alas, that man his breath should lose
In wayward, doubting race,
Nor his still home in shelter choose
Where Thou hast set his place!

6.

FINE CLOTHES.

"And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way."

(*For Palm Sunday.*)

Look westward, pensive little one,
How the bright hues together run,
Around where late the waning sun
Sank in his evening cloud.
Or eastward turn thee, and admire
How linger yet the showers of fire,
Deep in each fold, high on each spire
Of yonder mountain proud.

Thou seest it not: an envious screen,
A fluttering leaflet, hangs between
Thee and that fair mysterious scene,
A veil too near thine eye.
One finger's breadth at hand will mar
A world of light in Heaven afar,
A mote eclipse a glorious star,
An eyelid hide the sky.

And while to clear the view we stay,
Lo! the bright hour hath pass'd away;
A twilight haze, all dim and grey,
Hath quench'd the living gleam.
Remember this, thou little child,
In hours of Prayer, when fancies wild
Betwixt thee and thy Saviour mild
Come floating on life's stream.

O shame, O grief, when earth's rude toys,
An opening door, a breath, a noise,
Drive from the heart th' eternal joys,
Displace the Lord of Love!
For half a prayer perchance on high
We soar, and heaven seems bright and nigh,
But ah! too soon frail heart and eye
Sink down and earthward rove.

The Sunday garment glittering gay
The Sunday heart will steal away.
Then haste thee, ere the fond glance stray,
Thy precious robes unfold,

And cast before thy Saviour's feet:
Him spare not with thy best to greet,
Nor dread the dust of Sion's street,
'Tis jewels all and gold.

His very shrines, this week of woe,
Will doff their rich attire, and show
As mourners; fear we then to go
In glad and festal guise.
Yea, when the funeral days are o'er,
And altars shine in gold once more,
I bid thee lavish all thy store
In fearless sacrifice.

The gorgeous hues by sinners worn,
Our pride and our good Angel's scorn,—
His pavement let them now adorn,
Or with His daylight blend.
His palace court hath order blest,
When from His Throne of earthly rest
In glory beams th' immortal Guest,
We to the dust descend.

7.

IRREVERENCE IN CHURCH.

"The Lord is in His holy Temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him."

O GRIEF for Angels to behold
Within Christ's awful home!
A child regenerate here of old,
And here for lowliest adoration come,
Forgetting love and fear,
And with bold eye and tone bringing the rude world here!

Where is the Cross upon thy brow,
Seal of His Love and Might,
Whose life-blood earn'd thee power, thy vow
To keep, and serve Him in His courts aright?
Even in His week of grace,
Thou know'st, His ire brake out for His own holy place.

Thrice in those seven dread days, we read,
He to His temple came,
If haply from the wrath decreed
He might redeem th' abode of His great Name;
With silent warning Eye,
With scourge in Hand, with doom of thrilling Prophecy.

On Sunday eve with many a palm,
With many a chant divine,
It came, that Eye so keen and calm,
Like a still lamp, far searching aisle and shrine.
Happy the few, that hour,
Who with adoring hearts kneel'd to that gaze of power.

Nor they unblest, the morrow morn,
Who low before Him lay
In penitential guise forlorn,
And for His sounding scourge made duteous way:
Who at His word their store
Of earthly goods remov'd, nor ever brought them more.

But ah! no blessing left He then,
When the third evening fell,
And o'er the olive-shaded glen
Came wafted to His Mount His stern farewell.
"We meet not, till ye own
The Crucified and scorn'd before the Judgment Throne."

No blessing left the Lord of bliss,
Save on that widow poor,
Who only offer'd not amiss,
Whose praise for aye shall in His Book endure.
What if the place were doom'd?
Love will abide the fire: her gift is unconsum'd.

Thrice warn'd the dread departing Word
The city of His choice;
And threefold are Thy lessons, Lord,
Even now to reckless eye and heart and voice.
Why is there silence here?
Why hush the prattling babe? "An unseen Eye we fear."

What are these frowns, and penal ways
With rebel hand and tongue?
True tokens of the heart's amaze,
Where waits beside the door the scared throng,
By sentence heard in Heaven,
Of sin-retaining power, out of the Presence driven:

Driven for a while: and O! if yet
The scornful brow they bend,
The saintly Thrones are duly set,
The doom prepar'd, that without hope or end
The Temple Roof will draw
Down on the irreverent head, there lingering without awe.

8.

DISRESPECT TO ELDERS.

"And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord: and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. And he went from thence to Mount Carmel."

THE Powers of Ill have mysteries of their own,
Their sacramental signs and prayers,
Their choral chants in many a winning tone,
Their watchwords, seals, processions, known
Far off to friend and foe: their lights and perfum'd airs.

And even as men, where warring hosts abide,
By faint and silent tokens learn
At distance whom to trust, from whom to hide,
So round us set on every side
Th' aërial sentinels our good and ill discern.

The lawless wish, the unaverted eye,
Are as a taint upon the breeze,
To lure foul spirits: haughty brows and high
Are signals to invite him nigh,
Whose onset ever Saints await on bended knees.

Him in some thievish corner of the street
Full often lurking low we trace,
When sullen lips our kindly glances meet,
And looks that pastoral eyes should greet,
As flowers the morn, fall coldly, as on empty space.

His poisonous whisper hath been there, be sure,
Where childhood's simple courtesies
Are scorn'd? so trains he up his school impure,
So may his nursery tasks inure
The hearts that by and by against the Church shall rise.

Open their eyes, good Lord, that they may know
Whose edicts they so dearly hold,
Making Thy rites a revel and a show,
Where the rude world may come and go,
To sit at ease, and judge the Saints and Seers of old.

The stubborn knees with holy trembling smite,
Which bow not at Thine awful Name.
Pour from Thine Altar Thine own glorious Light,
Winning the world-enamour'd sight
To turn and see which way the healing radiance came.

O may our fallen land, though late, unlearn
Her reckless unbelieving heart,
And in the Gifts, sweet as from Aaron's urn,
And in the pure white Robe, discern
Signs lingering, faint and few, ere the last Saint depart.

O grant us Thy good Angel, evermore
To wait, with unseen scourge in hand,
On the Church path, and by the low school door.
Write in young hearts Thy reverend lore,
Nor be our christen'd babes as Bethel's lawless band.

Perhaps among the wailing matrons there
Was one who to her child had taught
The ways of scorn, breathing the poison'd air
Into that bosom fresh and fair
Which from her own drew life. — Alas! too well it wrought.

Now self-accusing by the drear wood-side
She ranges where th' avengers came,
In dreams of penance wandering wild and wide.
But he, the Healer and the Guide,
To Carmel top is gone, far from our woe and shame.

Now from his lips the judgment word hath past,
The lightning from his awful brow:
Low on his knees in some bleak cavern cast,
His prayers go up o'er ocean vast.
For those whom he hath doom'd: he is their Patron now.

And our Elisha—fails He on the Mount
To plead, His holy ones to pray
For rebels and profane?—O who may count
The drops from that eternal Fount
Of heavenly Intercession, welling night and day?

Ye fragrant showers, O were it not for you,
How could we breathe the parchèd air
Of the world's freedom, feverish and untrue,
Withering each soft and kindly hue
Even in young hearts? but ye spring-weather cherish there.

Your influence from afar we own and bless,
When, school-hours past, o'er village green,
Or homely garden, bright in its May dress,
Come greetings from a throng and press
Of little strangers, prompt as fairies round their queen.

Ever, as up and down our glances go,
In that fair round we may discern
A beaming smile and an obeisance low;—
So forest bluebells in a row
Stoop to the first May wind, sweeping o'er each in turn.

And here and there, perchance, one graver found
A comrade's roving eye may school
To courtesy forgot:—so in each round
Of duty, here on earth's dull ground,
Angels with us rehearse their own majestic Rule.

9.

HOME SICKNESS.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

(*For St. Mark's Day.*)

A HOLY home, young Saint, was thine,
Child of a priestly line,
Bred where the vernal midnight air
Was vocal with the prayer
Of Christians fresh from Paschal meat,
With supplication strong and sweet,
With fast and vigil, in meek strife
Winning their Pastor's life.

A holy home, a mother bold,
Who to the scatter'd fold
Threw wide her door at dead of night,
Nor fear'd the tyrant's might;—
The sister true of him who pour'd
His treasure at Thy feet, O Lord:
The Son of Comfort nam'd was he
By those who hearts could see.

A holy home, a refuge-bower,
For Saints in evil hour,
Where child, and slave, and household maid,
Of their own joy afraid,
As parent's voice familiar own
The pastoral Apostolic tone.
'Tis heard, and each the race would win
To tell the news within.

A holy household! yet beware!
Even here may lurk a snare.
These home delights, so keen and pure,
May not for aye endure.
Ere long, perchance, a sterner sound
Will summon: where wilt thou be found?
Even holy homes may hearts beguile,
And mar God's work a while.

10.

ILL TEMPER.

"Jesus was casting out a Devil, and it was dumb: and it came to pass, when the Devil was cast out, the dumb spake."

Nor often bends the face of heaven and earth
A dull and joyless brow
On hearts that own meek love and quiet mirth:
But such their aspect now.
Slowly and late through leaden skies
The scanty lights of morning rise,
And hour by weary hour
The hard stern outlines loom around
Of hill by many a frost embrown'd,
Pine top, and leafless forest bower.

And days have been, wild days of stormy wing,
O'er-powering breath and thought,
When the dark clouds plied each its heavy sling,
And air and ocean wrought
As erst o'er Noe, hiding all
The bright hues of this earthly ball.

The traveller on his way
Was like a pinnace on the deep,
Whirling around as rude waves sweep,
The sport of every gust and spray.

So, happy childhood, thine enchanted clime
Two evil spirits mar,
This wild, that sullen: o'er the unlovely prime
Looks out no lingering star,
No softly-brightening trail of morn:
Their day, in gloom or tempest born,
Lowers on till noon and night:—
Because the new-born soul made haste
Love's christening gift to scorn or waste,
Fretting or fierce, in Angels' sight.

Yet burns the sun on high beyond the cloud:
Each in his southern cave
The warm winds linger, but to be allowed
One breathing o'er the wave,
One flight across the unquiet sky;—
Swift as a vane may turn on high
The smile of heaven comes on.

So waits the Lord behind the veil,
His light on frenzied cheek or pale
To shed when the dark hour is gone,

O ye who feel the dumb deaf spirit's breath
About your heart and home,
As in foul cavern spreading damps of death,
Where only Love should come;—
Who mark, how wane the lamps of prayer
Where sullen thoughts are in the air;—
Haste, to the Healer bring
The moody silent one: perchance
He at the mighty word and glance
With Saints will hear, with Angels sing.

But if the frenzy fire blaze out, and cast
The sparks of Stygian glow,
Wild evil words, such showers as rode the blast
In Sodom's overthrow;
If tossing limb and glaring eye
Declare the o'ermastering agony;
On Tabor's crown behold
The pure calm glory: JESUS there

Hath spent the summer night in prayer:
There be your tale of anguish told.

Faint not, if prayer of man find tardy grace
Though saintly knees be bow'd,
But wait untir'd beneath the mountain's base;
Soon will the healing Cloud
Toward thee descend,—the voice of Love
Through the glad air will gently move:—
"Believe, and all may be:"—
The voice of Power command afar
The rushings of that ireful war,
And heart and tongue for prayer be free.

Nay, doubt it not: He gave His signs of yore,
When Angels at the porch
Met thee, and led along the sacred floor,
And from their unseen torch
Shrank muttering to his penal fire
The Demon Shade, companion dire
Of all in evil born.—
Within thee, if thou wilt, be sure
That happy hour's strong spells endure,
The seal of heaven, not all outworn.

V.

Children's Troubles.

1.

THE CROSS LAID ON INFANTS.

"And as they led Him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after JESUS."

"WELL may I brook the lash of scorn or woe
On mine own head to fall:
An evil mark is on me: well I know
I have deserv'd it all.
But these, my tender sheep,
What have they sown, such ill to reap?
Why should a new-born babe the watch of sorrow keep?"

Stay thee, sad heart, or ere thou breathe thy plaint,
And still thee, murmuring tongue,
And mark Who climbs the hill, so meek, so faint,
Whose brows with anguish wrung
On the rough way drop blood;
How rushing round Him like a flood,
They drag Him, fallen beneath the accurs'd and galling wood.

Nor Him alone. They seize upon his way,
Early that fearful morn,
One hastening Zion-ward, and on him lay
Part of the pain and scorn,
Part of the Cross: who knows
Which in his secret heart he chose,
The persecutors' peace, or the meek Saviour's woes?

Bow'd he with grudging mind the yoke to bear,
Or was the bitter sweet
For JESUS' sake? Lo, in the silent air
On unseen pinions fleet
The hosts of scorn and love:
With the sad train they onward move:—
Owns he the raven's wing, or the soft gliding Dove?

O surely, when the healing Rood he felt,
The sacrificial fire
Of Love redeeming did his spirit melt,
And with true heart's desire
He set where JESUS trode
His steps along the mountain road,
Still learning more and more of His sweet awful load.

Thou leanest o'er thine infant's couch of pain:
It breaks thine heart, to see
The wan glaz'd eye, the wasted arm, that fain
Would reach and cling to thee.
Yet is there quiet rest
Prepar'd upon the Saviour's breast
For babes unconscious borne on Calvary to be blest.

Nor to the darlings of thine aching heart,
Nor to thine own weak soul,
Grudge thou the good Cyrenian's patient part,
The Cross that maketh whole
Met unawares, and laid
Upon the unresisting head,
The tottering feet upon the way of sorrow led.

What if at times the playful hand, though weak,
From the safe bosom part
The nursing Father's awful crown to seek,
And find it thorns, and start
With griev'd and wondering call?
Who but would joy, one drop should fall
Out of his own dull veins, for Him who spar'd us all?

2.

TEARS RESTRAINED.

"Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men."

"Tears are of Nature's best, they say;
An April dry makes cheerless May:
Eyes that with answering glow
Meet eager joy, I love not well
That they should gaze immoveable
On sights of fear and woe."

"Nay, soft and wavering shews the heart
Whence the life-drops so lightly start,
And harsher by and by
Will prove, I ween, the withering hour
Of selfish care, for each brief shower
That hurries down our sky."

Such talk when Angels watching near
From earthly guardians overhear,
Haply in heart they say,
"These are half-truths. Who deeply scan
The mystery of the tears of man,
To nurse them or allay,

"Demands, they know, a mightier skill:
He only may the task fulfil,
Who hath the springs in hand
Of Ocean, saying to this wave,
'Retire:'—to that, 'unbridled rave
High on the thirsty sand.'

"He in His wisdom hath decreed
That shingle light, or frail sea-weed,
Should here the proud waves stay,
There, giant rocks aside be hurl'd.
So in the heart's lone awful world
His waters know their way.

"His Power the inward storm unchains
At will, His Power and Love refrains.
Ask ye, by what high law?

Go not to sage or seer, but trace
His impress on some bright young face,
Half passion and half awe.

"Whom He hath blest and call'd His own,
He tries them early, look and tone,
Bent brow and throbbing heart;
Tries them with pain, dread seal of Love.
Oft when their ready patience strove
With keen o'ermastering smart,

"And mortals deem'd it gentle blood,
Faith might discern the healing Rood
Invisibly applied:
And when her veil soft Pity drew
Over each glad and vernal hue,
And babes for others sigh'd,

"A tear, we knew, from Lazarus' grave,
Had lent high virtue to the wave
In their baptismal hour:
Or one of those He deign'd to weep
O'er Salem, in the oliv'd steep,
A world-embalming shower.

"Thou art stern courage, Heavenly Child,
Thou to Thy babes art mourning mild;
Even as Thy Saints of old
From weeping now forbore, now pray'd
Their eyes might endless showers be made
Over Thy fallen fold.

"One law is theirs, and Thine: to stay
Self-loving moans—allow no way
For grief that only grieves.
But drops that cherish prayer, or speed
The pure resolve, or duteous deed,—
He gave them, He receives."

3.

LONELINESS.

"And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."

ALONE, apart from mother dear
And father's gracious eye,
From all the nursery's joyous cheer,
Nor babe nor playmate by!

A place where others are at home,
But all is strange to me!
And now the twilight hour is come,
And the clear shadows flee.

Scarce dare I lay me down and sleep,
Lest in half-waking dream
Dimly all ways to dance and creep
The forms around me seem.

Help me with reading, help to pray,
That I with spirit free
Mine evening hymn may sing or say
Upon my bended knee.

But look your lore be true and wise,
The lamp ye light burn clear,
No flash to pass o'er strainèd eyes,
Leaving all dark and drear.—

O kindly and in happy hour
Ye bring the Volume blest:
There all is Truth, all Love, all Power:
Now sweet will be my rest.

Now at thy pleasure roam, wild heart,
In dreams o'er sea and land:
I bid thee at no shadows start:
The Upholder is at hand.

The lurid hues, the deep sea-gleams,
That blend in hour of storm,
Till every hurrying night-wind seems
To waft a phantom form,

Are but His signs, Who lonely pac'd
The midnight waters drear.
A spirit o'er the heaving waste
He seem'd—they cried for fear.

Hark! in the gale how softly thrills
The voice that wakes the dead!
Happy, whose ear such music fills
By night upon his bed.

"'Tis I," He saith: "be not afraid!"
Whether in ocean vast,
Or where across the moonlight glade
Strange woodland shapes are cast,

Or flickering shadows come and go
In weary hours of gloom,
While midnight lamps burn dim and low,
Round some mysterious room,

One only spell hath power to soothe
When thoughts and dreams appal.
Name thou His Name, Who is the Truth,
And He will hear thy call;

As when new-risen on Easter night
  Amid His own He stood,
Fear with His sudden shade, calm might
  Came with His Flesh and Blood;

Him name in Faith, and softly make
  The sign to Angels known.
So never need thy young heart ache
  In silence and alone.

4.

SHYNESS.

"Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."

Tear not away the veil, dear friend,
Nor from its shelter rudely rend
The heaven-protected flower:
It waits for sun and shower
To woo it kindly forth in its own time,
And when they come, untaught will know its hour of prime.

Blame not the eye that from thee turns,
The cheek that in a moment burns
With tingling fire so bright,
Feeling thine eager sight,—
The lowly drooping brow, the stammering tongue,
The giddy wavering thought, scarce knowing right and wrong.

What if herein weak Nature own
Her trembling underneath His Throne,
Whose eye can ne'er depart
From our frail evil heart?
Who knows how near His look of awful love
The gaze of aged men may to the young heart prove?

The springs of silent awe, that dwell
Deepest in heart, will highest swell,
When in His destin'd hour
He calls them out in power.
Hide thou thy face, and fear to look on God,
Else never hope to grasp the wonder-working rod.

With quivering hands that closely fold
Over his downcast eyes, behold
The Shepherd on the Mount
Adores the Living Fount
Of pure unwasting fire: no glance he steals,
But in his heart's deep joy the Dread Eye gazing feels,—

Feels it, and gladlier far would die
Than let it go. There will he lie
Till the Dread Voice return,

And he the lore may learn
Of his appointed task—bold deeds to dare,
High mysteries to impart, deep penances to bear.

Ere long to the same holy place
He will return, and face to face
Upon the glory gaze,
Then onward bear the rays
To Israel: priest and people from his glance
Will shrink, as he from God's in that deep Horeb trance.

Then tear we not the veil away,
Nor ruthless tell in open day
The tender spirit's dream.
O let the deepening stream
Might from the mountain-springs in silence draw.
O mar we not His work, who trains His saints in awe!

5.

STAMMERING.

"He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

When heart and head are both o'erflowing,
When eager words within are glowing,
And all at once for utterance crowd and throng,
How hard to find no tongue!
The little babe upon the breast
Wails out his wail and is at rest:
These may but look and long.

Perhaps some deed of sacred story,
Or lesson deep of God's high glory,
For many a toilsome hour rehears'd or read,
In holy Church is said.
He knows it all—none half so well,—
And longs in turn his tale to tell,
But all his words are fled.

Perhaps on high the chant is ringing,
The youthful choir the free notes flinging,
To soar at will the mazy roof around:
But his to earth are bound.
In every chord his heart beats high,
But vainly would his frail lips try
The tones his soul hath found.

O gaze not so in wistful sadness:
Ere long a morn of power and gladness
Shall break the heavy dream; the unchain'd voice
Shall in free air rejoice:
Thoughts with their words and tones shall meet,
The unfaltering tongue harmonious greet
The heart's eternal choice.

Even now the call that wakes the dying
Steals on thine ear with gentle sighing:
The breath, the dew of heaven hath touch'd thy tongue:
Far to the winds are flung
The bonds unseen, ill spirits' work:
Satan no more may round thee lurk,
Thine Ephphatha is sung.

6.

FEAR OF WILD BEASTS.

"No lion shall be there, nor any ravening beast go up thereon: it shall not be found there."

(*For Quinquagesima.*)

Oft have I hid mine eyes,
When lightning thrill'd across the midnight skies:
When tempests howl'd o'er land or main,
Oft have I thought upon the deluge rain.
But now I read, that never more
Will Heaven's dread windows so give out their awful store.
The rainbow-sign is given,—
His word endures in Heaven.

Oft have I shrank for fear,
When forms that seem'd of giant mould drew near,
And deeply in my childish heart
I thrill'd at every rush, and bound, and start:

But now I hear th' Eternal Law
That binds them in His chain of deep mysterious awe:
I fear no monster birth,—
His word endures on earth.

Even as the bright calm bow
Is safety's pledge when waters wild o'erflow,
As hornèd herds will turn and fly
If but a child survey them with bold eye,
So in the storms we may not see
Thy Saviour's rainbow crown, O Faith, thine own may be:
So, if His Cross He raise,
Hell powers at distance gaze.

There may we calmly dwell,
Nor sounding tempest dread, nor lion fell.
But, little children, muse and mark:
His blessing waits on inmates of His ark,
On such as in His awful shade
Abide, and keep the seal His Holy Spirit made.
Else will the flood awake,
His chain the Lion break.

7.

SEPARATION.

"For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be made whole."

She did but touch with finger weak
The border of His sacred vest,
Nor did He turn, nor glance, nor speak;
Yet found she health and rest.

Well may the word sink deep in me,
For I, full many a fearful hour,
Fast clinging, mother dear, to thee,
Have felt Love's guardian power.

When looks were strange on every side,
When gazing round I only saw
Far-reaching ways, unknown and wide,
I could but nearer draw:

I could but nearer draw, and hold
Thy garment's border as I might.
This while I felt, my heart was bold,
My step was free and light.

Thou haply on thy path the while
Didst seem unheeding me to fare,
Scarce now and then, by bend or smile,
Owning a playmate there.

What matter? well I knew my place,
Deep in my mother's inmost heart:
I fear'd but, in my childish race,
I from her robe might part.

O Lord, the Fount of Mother's Love
And Infant's Faith, I hear Thee mourn:
"Thee, tender as a callow dove,
Long have I nurs'd and borne:

"Have nurs'd and borne thee up on high,
Ere Mother's love to thee was known:
And now I set thee down, to try
If thou canst walk alone.

"Nay, not alone—but I would prove
Thy duteous heart. O grudge no more
Thy Lord His joy, when healing Love
His very robe flows o'er."

8.

BEREAVEMENT.

"The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before."

I MARK'D when vernal meads were bright,
And many a primrose smil'd,
I mark'd her, blithe as morning light,
A dimpled three years' child.

A basket on one tender arm
Contain'd her precious store
Of spring-flowers in their freshest charm,
Told proudly o'er and o'er.

The other wound with earnest hold
About her blooming guide,
A maid who scarce twelve years had told:
So walk'd they side by side.

One a bright bud, and one might seem
A sister flower half blown.
Full joyous on their loving dream
The sky of April shone.

The summer months swept by: again
That loving pair I met.
On russet heath, and bowery lane,
Th' autumnal sun had set:

And chill and damp that Sunday eve
Breath'd on the mourners' road
That bright-eyed little one to leave
Safe in the Saints' abode.

Behind, the guardian sister came,
Her bright brow dim and pale—
O cheer thee, maiden! in His Name,
Who still'd Jairus' wail!

Thou mourn'st to miss the fingers soft
That held by thine so fast,
The fond appealing eye, full oft
Tow'rd thee for refuge cast.

Sweet toils, sweet cares, for ever gone!
No more from stranger's face
Or startling sound, the timid one
Shall hide in thine embrace.

Thy first glad earthly task is o'er,
And dreary seems thy way.
But what if nearer than before
She watch thee even to-day?

What if henceforth by Heaven's decree
She leave thee not alone,
But in her turn prove guide to thee
In ways to Angels known?

O yield thee to her whisperings sweet:
Away with thoughts of gloom!
In love the loving spirits greet,
Who wait to bless her tomb.

In loving hope with her unseen
Walk as in hallow'd air.
When foes are strong and trials keen,
Think, "What if she be there?"

9.

ORPHANHOOD.

"Behold thy mother."

Oft have I watch'd thy trances light,
And long'd for once to be
A partner in thy dream's delight,
And smile in sleep with thee;
To sport again, one little hour,
With the pure gales, that fan thy nursery bower,
And as of old undoubting upward spring,
Feeling the breath of heaven beneath my joyous wing.

But rather now with thee, dear child,
Fain would I lie awake,
For with no feverish care and wild
May thy clear bosom ache;
Thy woes go deep, but deeper far
The soothing power of yonder kindly star:
Thy first soft slumber on thy mother's breast
Was never half so sweet as now thy calm unrest.

Thy heart is sad to think upon
Thy mother far away,
Wondering perchance, now she is gone,
Who best for thee may pray.
In many a waking dream of love
Thou seest her yet upon her knees above:
The vows she breath'd beside thee yesternight,
She breathes above thee now, wing'd with intenser might.

Both vespers soft and matins clear
For thee she duly pays,
Now as of old, and there as here;
Nor yet alone she prays.
Thy vision—(whoso chides, may blame
The instinctive reachings of the Altar flame)
Shews thee above, in yon ethereal air,
A holier Mother, rapt in more prevailing prayer.

'Tis she to whom thy heart took flight
Of old in joyous hour,
When first a precious sister spright
Came to thy nursery bower,

And thou with earnest tone didst say,
"Mother, let Mary be her name, I pray,
For dearly do I love to think upon
That gracious Mother-Maid, nursing her Holy One."

Then in delight, as now in woe,
Thou to that home didst turn,
Where God, an Infant, dwelt below:
The thoughts that ache and burn
Nightly within thy bosom, find
A home in Nazareth to their own sweet mind.
More than all music are the soothings dear
Which meet thee at that door, and whisper, Christ is here.

10.

FIRE.

"The Angel of the Lord made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind."

Sweet maiden, for so calm a life
Too bitter seem'd thine end;
But thou hadst won thee, ere that strife,
A more than earthly friend.

We miss thee in thy place at school,
And on thine homeward way,
Where violets by the reedy pool
Peep out so shyly gay:

Where thou, a true and gentle guide,
Wouldst lead thy little band,
With all an elder sister's pride,
And rule with eye and hand.

And if *we* miss, O who may speak
What thoughts are hovering round
The pallet where thy fresh young cheek
Its evening slumber found?

How many a tearful longing look
In silence seeks thee yet,
Where in its own familiar nook
Thy fireside chair is set?

And oft when little voices dim
Are feeling for the note
In chanted prayer, or psalm, or hymn,
And wavering wildly float,

Comes gushing o'er a sudden thought
Of her who led the strain,
How oft such music home she brought—
But ne'er shall bring again.

O say not so! the springtide air
Is fraught with whisperings sweet;
Who knows but heavenly carols there
With ours may duly meet?

Who knows how near, each holy hour,
The pure and child-like dead
May linger, where in shrine or bower
The mourner's prayer is said?

And He who will'd, thy tender frame
(O stern yet sweet decree!)
Should wear the Martyr's robe of flame,
He hath prepar'd for thee

A garland in that region bright
Where infant spirits reign,
Ting'd faintly with such golden light
As crowns His Martyr train.

Nay doubt it not: His tokens sure
Were round her death-bed shewn:
The wasting pain might not endure,
'Twas calm ere life had flown,

Even as we read of Saints of yore:
Her heart and voice were free
To crave one quiet slumber more
Upon her Mother's knee.

11.

PUNISHMENT.

"They shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity."

The scourge in hand of God or Man
Full deeply tries the secret soul.
Yon dark-eyed maid, her bearing scan;
The tear that from beneath her quivering eyelids stole,
The shade, that hangs e'en now
Upon her wistful brow,—
It comes not all of shame or pain,
But she with pitying heart full fain
Would twice the penance burthen bear,
Might she the chastening arm, so lov'd and loving, spare.

So have I mark'd some faithful hound,
Recall'd by look and voice severe,
Come conscious of his broken bound,
And lowly cast him down as in remorseful fear,
One of the teachers true
Commission'd to imbue

Our dull hard hearts with heavenly skill,
With heavenly love our proud cold will.
How seems he penance to implore,
Patient in woe decreed, and humbly seeking more!

He who of old at Caiaphas' door
Denied th' eternal Holy One,—
In words denied, but own'd in store
Of penitential tears—why made he restless moan,
When the forgiving Eye
Had beam'd on him so nigh,
And thrice, for his denials three,
The Lord had said, My Shepherd be?
Yet were his waking thoughts self-blame,
And ever with cock-crowing tearful memory came.

For should the soul that loves indeed
Stoop o'er the edge of deadly sin,
And e'er so lightly taste its meed,—
Though wonder-working grace might heal the wound within,
Yet may the scar and stain
To the last fire remain,

And Love will mourn them: loyal Love
Will for the Holy Friend above
Lament in reverent sympathy,
Feeling upon her heart the griev'd and gracious Eye.

Alas for sullen souls, that turn
Keen wholesome airs to poison blight!
Touch'd with Heaven's rod, in ire they burn,
Or in dim anguish writhe: beside them in its might
The saving Cross we rear,
They neither love nor fear;
Each from his own unblessèd tree
The five dread Wounds unmov'd they see—
O hard of heart!—and scornful say,
"Saviour, if such Thou be, come chase our pangs away."

Th' impenitent would still abate
His pain, the mourner still enhance.—
O Lord, I know my sin is great,
I would not hide away from Thee in heartless trance;
When penal lightnings glare,
O give me grace, to bare

My sinful bosom to the blast;—
Nor, when the judgment hour is past,
Bask on in warmth of worldly ease,
But hold to the wrong'd Cross on worn and aching
knees.

12.

PENANCE.

"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

Thou, who with eye too sad and wan
Dost on the memory gaze
Of evil days,
Open thy casement, moody man,
Look out into the midnight air,
And taste the gushing fragrance there,
Drink of the balm the soft winds bear
From dewy nook and flowery maze:
They rise and fall, they come and go,
With touch ethereal whispering low
Of grace to penitential woe,
And of the soothing hand that Love on Conscience lays.

How welcome, in the sweet still hour,
Falls on the weary heart,
Listening apart,
Each rustling note from breeze and bower;

The mimic rain mid poplar leaves
The mist drops from th' o'erloaded eaves,
Sighs that the herd half-dreaming heaves,
Or owlet chanting his dim part;
Or trickling of imprison'd rill
Heard faintly down some pastoral hill,
His pledge, Who rules the froward will
With more than kingly power, with more than wizard art.

But never mourner's ear so keen
Watch'd for the soothing sounds
That walk their rounds
Upon the moonlight air serene,
As the bright sentinels on high
Stoop to receive each contrite sigh,
When the hot world hath hurried by,
And souls have time to feel their wounds.
Nor ever tenderest bosom beat
So truly to the noiseless feet
Of shadows that from light clouds fleet,
Where ocean gently rocks within his summer bounds,

As Saints around the Glory-Throne
To each faint sigh respond,
And yearning fond,
Of Penitents that inly moan.
O surely Love adoring there
Is quicken'd to intenser prayer,
When youthful hearts are fain to wear—
Unbidden wear—their penance bond:
When stripling grave and maiden meek
Forego the bright hours of the week,
Nor at the board their place will seek:—
"Have we not sinn'd? and sin must be by pain
aton'd."

Thrice happy, in Repentance' school
So early taught and tried!
At JESUS' side,
And by His dread Fore-runner's rule,
Train'd from the womb! nor they unblest,
Who underneath the world's bright vest
With sackcloth tame their aching breast,
The sharp-edg'd cross in jewels hide:—

Who day by day and year by year
Survey the Past with deepening fear,
Yet hourly with more hopeful ear
To the dim Future turn, th' absolving Voice abide.

Not as lost Esau mourn'd, they mourn;
No loud and bitter cry
They cast on high:
But on through silent air is borne
The fragrance of their tearful love
To the Redeemer's feast above.
Fresher than steam of dewy grove,
When April showers are twinkling nigh,
To aged husbandman at eve,
Is the sweet breath the Heavens receive
When bosoms with confession heave,
When lowly Magdalen hath won her Saviour's eye.

13.

LANGUOR[f].

"There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance."

Come, and with us by summer seas
The revel hold of Mirth and Ease.
Together now, and now apart,
Three happy sprites, we glide and dart
O'er rock and sand, as free and bright
As waves that leap in morning light;—
Or mark in playful pensiveness
How fast the evening clouds undress
O'er gleaming waters far away,
And by the tir'd Sun gently lay
Their robes of glory, to be worn
More gorgeous with returning morn.
There, and where'er our fancies roam,
Our trusting hearts are still at home,

[f] For the leading idea in these lines the author is indebted to a friend, the writer of the stanzas in p. 19, entitled "The First Smile."

For at our side we feel
Our father's smile, our mother's glance.
Say, can this earth a loving trance
Of deeper bliss reveal?

Yes: from the shore with us return,
And thou a deeper bliss shalt learn.
Just as the mounting sun hath drawn
Warm fragrance from the thymy lawn,
Come to our cottage home, and see
If aught of sprightly, fresh, and free,
With the calm sweetness may compare
Of the pale form half slumbering there,
Our little sister, late as gay
As sea-lark drench'd in ocean spray,
Now from her couch of languor freed
One hour upon soft air to feed.
O gently tread, and mildly gaze,
Ill may she brook our bolder ways;
The babe who cannot speak
Tempers, to her, his strong caress;
Lightly the small soft fingers press
The wan and wearied cheek.

And if in festive hour, beside
The laughing waves and tuneful tide,
Parental eyes for joy grow dim,
What notes may trace the heart's deep hymn,
In silence mingling with the breath
Of child by prayer recall'd from death,
Or with the pulse's healthier chime
In praise melodious keeping time?
O, when its flower seems fain to die,
The full heart grudges smile or sigh
To aught beside, though fair and dear.
Like a bruis'd leaf, at touch of Fear
Its hidden fragrance Love gives out.
Therefore this one dear couch about
We linger hour by hour:
The love that each to each we bear
All treasures of endearing care,
Into her lap we pour.

Type of that holiest Family,
When smitten souls, at point to die,
Come darkling home, prepar'd to wait
In doubt and dimness by the gate.

Then far along the mournful way
Paternal Love speeds out, to say
The words of welcome; Angels bear
The robe, sweet pledge of pardoning care;
And as he daily seeks aright
His lowly station in their sight,
They watch th' all-ruling Eye, for leave
Some flower of Paradise to give,
Bid amaranth odours round him float,
Or breathe into his ear one note
Of that high loving strain,
Which rings from all the harps of Heaven,
When from the Shrine the word is given,
"The dead soul lives again."

O, if the Powers and Thrones above
Hover with crowns of joy and love,
Ungrudg'd, unsparing, over brows
That mourn in dust their broken vows,
Rather than where the Saints are seen,
Each reigning in his place serene:—
If in Love's earthly home and bower
The mournful or the dangerous hour

Unblam'd each prayer and longing guides
To the one couch where Pain abides :—
He who is Love, and owns Love's Name,
Is in His ocean springs the same
As in each little murmuring brook
That cheers soft mead or wayside nook:
Brighter the joy, be sure,
Before Him, where one sinner weeps,
Than where, in Heaven's unchanging deeps,
A thousand orbs endure.

VI.

Children's Sports.

1.

GARDENING.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."

Seest thou yon woodland child,
How amid flowerets wild,
Wilder himself, he plies his pleasure-task?
That ring of fragrant ground,
With its low woodbine bound,
He claims; no more, as yet, his little heart need ask.

There learns he flower and weed,
To sort with careful heed:
He waits not for the weary noontide hour.

There with the soft night air
Comes his refreshing care:
Each tiny leaf looks up, and thanks him for the shower.

Thus faithful found awhile,
He wins the joyous smile
Of friend or parent; glad and bright is he,
When for his garland gay
He hears the kind voice say,
"Well hast thou wrought, dear boy: the garden thine shall be."

And when long years are flown,
And the proud word, Mine Own,
Familiar sounds, what joy in field or bower
To view by Memory's aid
Again that garden glade,
And muse on all the lore there learn'd in each bright hour!

Is not a life well-spent
A child's play-garden, lent
For Heaven's high trust to train young heart and limb?

When in yon field on high
Our hard-won powers we try,
Will no mild tones of earth blend with th' adoring
hymn?

O fragrant, sure, will prove
The breath of patient Love,
E'en from these fading sweets by Memory cast,
As deepening evermore
To Him our song we pour,
Who lent us Earth, that He might give us Heaven
at last.

2.

MAY GARLANDS.

"The sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth."

Come, ye little revellers gay,
Learners in the school of May,
Bring me here the richest crown
Wreath'd this morn on breezy down,
Or in nook of copsewood green,
Or by river's rushy screen,
Or in sunny meadow wide,
Gemm'd with cowslips in their pride;
Or perchance, high priz'd o'er all,
From beneath the southern wall,
From the choicest garden bed,
'Mid bright smiles of infants bred,
Each a lily of his own
Offering, or a rose half-blown.

Bring me now a crown as gay,
Wreath'd and woven yesterday.
Where are now those forms so fair?—
Wither'd, drooping, wan and bare,
Feeling nought of earth or sky,
Shower or dew, behold they lie,
Vernal airs no more to know:—
They are gone—and ye must go,
Go where all that ever bloom'd,
In its hour must lie entomb'd.—
They are gone; their light is o'er:—
Ye must go; but ye once more
Hope in joy to be new-born,
Lovelier than May's gleaming morn.

Hearken, children of the May,
Now in your glad hour and gay,
Ye whom all good Angels greet
With their treasures blithe and sweet:—
None of all the wreaths ye prize
But was nurs'd by weeping skies.
Keen March winds, soft April showers,
Brac'd the roots, embalm'd the flowers.

So, if e'er that second spring
Her green robe o'er you shall fling,
Stern self-mastery, tearful prayer,
Must the way of bliss prepare.
How should else Earth's flowerets prove
Meet for those pure crowns above?

3.

SUNDAY NOSEGAYS.

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Ye children that on Jesus wait,
Gathering around His temple gate
To learn His word and will,
For glory hunger'd and athirst,—
Which of you all would fain be first?
Come here and take your fill.

Come, still and pure as drops of dew,
Come to the feast prepar'd for you,
Your prayer in silence breathe;—
Seek the last room, the scorn'd of all:
If that be fill'd, adoring fall
The Holy Board beneath.

Not to the quick untrembling gaze,
The heart that bounds at human praise,
Loves He to say, Go higher.

But most He turns His face away,
When envy's sidelong eyes betray
The foul unhallow'd fire.

Say, little maids that love the spring,
Of all the fragrant gems ye bring
For bower or bridal wreath,
Is aught so fair as violets shy,
Betraying where they lowly lie
By the soft airs they breathe?

Oft as with mild caressing hand
Ye cull and bind in tender band
Those bashful flowers so sweet,
With many a Sunday smile,—to rest
Upon some lov'd and honour'd breast,
A welcome gift and meet,—

Ye to the Heaven-taught soul present
A token and a sacrament,
How to the highest room
Earth's lowliest flowers our Lord receives;
Close to His heart a place He gives,
Where they shall ever bloom.

4.

DRESSING UP.

"Put on the whole armour of God."

GREAT is the joy when leave is won,
On sun-bright holiday,
To deck some passive little one
In fancy-garments gay:

Whether it be a bright-hair'd boy
With brow so bold and high,
Or maiden elf with aspect coy,
Grave lip and laughing eye.

What flashes of quick thought are there,
What deep delight and pride!
Till the whole house the wonder share,
From room to room they glide.

You smile, their eager ways to see:
But mark their choice, when they
To choose their sportive garb are free,
The moral of their play.

In semblance proud of warrior's mail
The stripling shall appear,
The maiden meek in robe and veil
Shall mimic bridal gear.

All thoughtless they, to thoughtful eyes
Love-tokens high present:—
The Bride descending from the skies,
The mail in Baptism lent.

Yes: fearless may he lift the brow,
Who bears, unstain'd and bright,
By touch of Angels seal'd e'en now,
His Saviour's Cross of might.

Radiant may be her glance of mirth,
Who wears her chrisom-vest
Pure as when first at her new birth
It wrapt her tender breast.

O, if so fair the first dim ray
  In JESUS' morn of grace,
How will it glow, His perfect Day,
  On our triumphant race!

If but His banner's hovering shade
  May scare the infernal band,
How strong, who to the end array'd
  In His full armour stand!

Then haste, young warrior, year by year,
  And day by day, and hour
By hour, His armoury to draw near,
  And don His robes of Power.

Thy girdle, Truth—to hate a lie:—
  Then, purpose high of soul
In Righteousness to live and die,
  Thy breastplate, firm and whole.

Then, heavenly Calmness, lest thou fall
  Where scandals line the way;
Faith in the Unseen, thy shield o'er all,
  Each fiery dart to stay.

Hope in His gift, thine helmet sure;
Trust in His living Word
Thy weapon keen, to chase the impure,
His Spirit's awful sword.

This is thine armour, bath'd in heaven:
Keep thou by prayer and fast
Thy Saviour's seal, so early given:—
All shall be thine at last.

5.

PEBBLES ON THE SHORE.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Not undelightful prove
The rounds of restless love,
When high and low she searches, mine and mart,
And turns and tosses o'er
Some crownèd merchant's store,
And scarce fit token finds of the full yearning heart.

Yet in Heaven's searching beam
As bright may haply seem
A child's unpurchas'd offering, stone or shell,
Found by some joyous crew
Glittering with ocean dew,
Where feathery lines of spray the wave's last boundary tell.

Behold them, how they dance
Beneath the breezy glance
Of April morn, or fresh October noon;—
How on the twinkling sand,
In many a fairy band,
They leave their footprints light, to turn and count them soon.

What if some nursing friend
His sportive counsel lend
To sort the treasure, wreathe the chaplet gay,
Coral or crimson weed?—
Then is it joy indeed,
When he to mind recalls some comrade far away.

Oh then how bright arise
To fancy's quick young eyes
The smiles that o'er the kindling brow will spread,
When on the nursery floor
They range their bounteous store,
Precious to them as pearls from India's ocean-bed!

What though unseen, unbought
By money, toil, or thought,
Those simple offerings—come they not of Love?
Love gives, and Love will take.
Such are the vows we make
To the dread Bethlehem Babe, nor He will them reprove.

What is a royal crown,
Or first-born babe, cast down
Before His Cradle, to one heavenly smile?
We may not buy nor earn,
But He toward us will turn
Of His own Love: but we must kneel in Love the while.

Thus learn we Bounty's lore
Along the unbounded shore:—
And even beneath the mists which man hath made,
Where Mammon walks the street,
We light on memories sweet
Of a dread Bargain seal'd, a countless Ransom paid.

We hear the frequent cry,
"Approach, ye poor, and buy,
Buy of the best for nought:"—and dreams arise
Of yon supernal Home,
And Angel voices—"Come,
Come to the Living Wells, buy without gold or price.

"Come to the true Vine's shade,
There in contrition laid
Drink of the drops He in your cup shall press.
Come to the quiet fold,
And while the lambs are told,
Taste the pure treasure of the pastoral wilderness."

The homeless and forlorn
In cities,—think they scorn
Freely to quaff the fountain's unbought store?
Freely to learn the song
It warbles all night long
In murmurings such as sooth'd their cradle dreams of yore?

6.

BATHING.

"Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water."

The May winds gently lift the willow leaves;
Around the rushy point comes weltering slow
The brimming stream; alternate sinks and heaves
The lily-bud, where small waves ebb and flow.
Willowherb and meadowsweet!
Ye the soft gales, that visit there,
From your waving censers greet
With store of freshest balmiest air.

Come bathe—the steaming noontide hour invites;
Even in your face the sparkling waters smile.—
Yet on the brink they linger, timid wights,
Pondering and measuring; on their gaze the while
Eddying pool and shady creek
Darker and deeper seem to grow:
On and onward still, they seek
Where sport may less adventurous show.

At length the boldest springs: but ere he cleave
The flashing waters, eye and thought grow dim;
Too rash it seems, the firm green earth to leave:
Heaven is beneath him: shall he sink or swim?
Far in boundless depth he sees
The rushing clouds obey the gale,
Trembling hands and tottering knees,
All in that dizzy moment fail.

Oh mark him well, ye candidates of Heaven,
Call'd long ago to float in JESUS' ark
Ye know not where:—His signal now is given,
The Lord draws near upon the waters dark:
To your eager prayer the Voice
Makes awful answer: "Come to Me:
Once for all now seal your choice,
With Christ to tread the boisterous sea."

And dare we come? since he, the trusted Saint,
Who with one only shar'd the Lord's high love,
Shrank from the tossing gale, and scarce with faint
And feeble cry toward the Saviour strove.

Yes: we answer the dread call,
Not fearless, but in duteous awe:
He will stay the frail heart's fall,
His arm will onward, upward draw.

O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?
Spare not for Him to walk the midnight wave,
On the dim shore at morn to seek Him out[s],
Work 'neath His Eye, and near Him make thy grave.
So backslidings past no more
Shall in the Heavens remember'd be,
Faith the Three Denials sore
O'erpaying with Confessions Three.

Strange power of mighty Love! if Heaven allow
Choice, on the restless waters rather found,
Meeting her Lord, with cross and bleeding brow,
Than calmly waiting on the guarded ground!
Yearning ever to spring forth
And feel the cold waves for His sake;—
All her giving of no worth,
Yet, till she give, her heart will ache.

[s] St. John xxi.

7.

ENACTING HOLY RITES.

"Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

They talk of wells in caverns deep,
Whose waters run a wondrous race
Far underground, and issuing keep
Our floating tokens, bright or base.
So in the child's light play we read
The portion to the man decreed;
His future self he hastes to prove
In art, in toil, in warfare, or in love.

Those waves emerging far away,
True to their fount, the likeness bear
Of fancies nurtur'd many a day,
How in the end their course they wear
Into the light of Manhood free:
The hidden soul breaks out, and we
In careless mien, in careworn face,
The long-forgotten Infant wondering trace.

Oh, many a joyous mother's brow
Is sadden'd o'er when sports are rife,
And watching by, she seems e'en now
The tale to read of coming strife.
Through lawless camp, o'er ocean wild,
Her prophet eye pursues her child,
Scans mournfully her Poet's strain,
Fears, for her Merchant, loss alike and gain.

But if a holier task engage
His busy dream,—if clad in white
She see him turn some hallow'd page,
Dimly enact some awful rite,—
Then high beyond the loftiest Heaven
The flight that to her hopes is given,
And darker than the gloomiest deep
The fears that in her boding bosom creep.

She sees in heart an empty Throne,
And falling, falling far away,
Him whom the Lord had plac'd thereon:
She hears the dread Proclaimer say,

"Cast ye the lot, in trembling cast[h];
The Traitor to his place hath past."—
Strive ye with Prayer and Fast to guide
The dangerous Glory where it shall abide:

Guide it towards some serious brow,
In love and patience lowly bent,
Some youthful Athanase[i], e'en now
Upon his future task intent;
His Creed rehearsing to the roar
Of billows on the lonely shore,
Or with a child's deep earnestness
Shewing his mates how Saints baptize and bless.

[h] Acts i.

[i] "Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, on a certain day being in his own house, cast his eyes towards the sea, and seeing afar off boys playing on the shore, and enacting a Bishop and the customs of the Church, as long as he saw nothing too adventurous in their play, was pleased with what he saw, and amused himself with their doings. But when they touched even upon the Mysteries, he was troubled, and summoning the Clergy, made them observe the boys: whom having caused to be brought before him, he interrogated about their play, and the kind of things said and done therein; . . and they informed him that Athanasius was their Bishop and director, and that he had baptized some of the lads who were unchristened. Of these Alexander made careful inquiry, what had been asked of them, or done to them, by him who was Priest in their game, and what they answered, and were taught to say. And finding that all the

She hears: one glance,—how brief and keen!—
As with a lightning touch reveals
Her Saint upon his path serene;
With all her heart his vow she seals,
With all her heart the prayer prolongs,
That round him still the Watchers' songs
Echoing may purge the hallow'd air,
And from his soul the dreams of Judas scare.

Ever in hope and agony
She prays:—in hope when most he fears,
In trembling when his hopes mount high.
Far, far away she feels, not hears
A deep chord thrill, an answering note
Go forth in Heaven, and earthward float.
Her Guardian Angel wafts it nigh,
But more it breathes than Angel sympathy.

order of the Church had been accurately observed in their case, he deemed, on consulting with the Priests about him, that there was no need to rebaptize such as had once for all received the grace of God in simplicity. Only he performed for them the other ceremonies, which the Priests alone may lawfully minister in the Sacraments. Moreover, Athanasius and the other boys, who in their sport wore Priests and Deacons, he commended to their respective kinsmen, calling God to witness; to be nurtured for the Church, and trained to that which they had enacted."—*Sozomen, Eccl. Hist.* i. 17.

Yea, gloom was on the Source of Light[j],
A trouble at Joy's very heart,
When with the Traitor in His sight
His secret sad He told apart.
And when He spake of treasures seal'd
To proud wise men, to babes reveal'd[k],
From His celestial aspect fell
A lightning as in Heaven, a bliss ineffable.

These are Thy signs, Thou Shepherd good,
To Daring and to Meekness given;
To babes of mild, self-chastening mood,
Whispering their part in chants of Heaven.
"Else," warning Love cries out, "beware
Of Chancel screen and Altar stair."
Love interceding kneels in fear,
Lest to the Pure th' unholy draw too near.

[j] St. John xiii. 21. [k] St. Matt. xi. 25.

VII.

Lessons of Nature.

1.

VERNAL MIRTH.

'Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves, that summer is now nigh at hand."

What is the joy the young lambs know,
When vernal breezes blow?
Why carol out so blithe and free
The little birds from every leafless tree?

Why bound so high the boys at play
On grass so green and gay?
From nursing arms, his proper throne,
Why rings so clear yon infant's joyous tone?

The life that in them deeply dwells
Of genial spring-tide tells:
Of their own selves they see and know
To what glad tune the summer brooks shall flow.

Be thou through life a little child;
By manhood undefil'd;
So shall no Angel grudge thy dreams
Of fragrance pure and ever brightening beams.

2.

THE BIRD'S NEST.

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, so the Lord alone did lead him."

Behold the treasure of the nest,
The wingèd mother's hope and pride:
See how they court her downy breast,
How soft they slumber, side by side.

Strong is the life that nestles there,
But into motion and delight
It may not burst, till soft as air
It feel Love's brooding, timely might.

Even such a blissful nest I deem
The cradle of the Lord's new-born,
Where deeply lurks the living beam
Lit in the glad baptismal morn.

But into keen enduring flame
It may not burst, till heavenly Love
Have o'er it spread, in Christ's dear Name,
The pinions of His brooding Dove.—

Now steal once more across the lawn,
Stoop gently through the cypress bough,
And mark which way life's feeble dawn
Works in their little hearts, and how.

Still close and closer, as you pry,
They nestle 'neath their mother's plume,
Or with a faint forlorn half-cry,
Shivering bewail her empty room.

Or haply, as the branches wave,
The little round of tender bills
Is rais'd, the due repast to crave
Of her who all their memory fills.

Hast thou no wisdom here to learn,
Thou nestling of the Holy Dove,
How hearts that with the true life burn
Live by the pulse of filial love?

When sorrow comes to thy calm nest,
Early or late, as come it will,
Think of yon brood, yon downy breast,
And hide thee deep in JESUS' will.

By morning and by evening moan,
As doves beneath the cedar spray,
Make thou thy fearful longings known
To Him who is not far away.

Him Cherub-borne in royal state,
The food of His Elect to be,
With eager lip do thou await,
And veilèd brow, and trembling knee.

So underneath the warm bright wing,
The hidden grace of thy new birth
Shall gather might to soar and sing,
Where'er He bids, in heaven or earth.

3.

THE MOTHER BIRD WITH HER YOUNG.

"How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

THE Lord who lends His creatures all
A tongue to preach His will—
To Salem came His mournful call,
His last sad word to Sion's wall,
From the green Eastern hill.

The little children waiting by
Wonder'd to see Him weep.
The louder swell'd their duteous cry,
As He in lowliest majesty
Rode down the shady steep.

Thy little heart, so wild and weak,
Perhaps is musing now,
"Had I the joy to hear Him speak,
To see that Eye, so heavenly meek,
Sure I should keep my vow."

Nay, in that hour He thought on thee,
And left a token sure,
Ever in times of vernal glee
Around thee in thy walks to be,
And keep thee kind and pure.

Look how the Hen invites her brood
Beneath her wing to lie,
Look how she calls them to their food,
How eyes, in eager, dauntless mood,
The wheeling hawk on high.

So would thy Lord His pinions spread
Around thee, night and day,
So lead thee, where is heavenly Bread,
So, by the Cross whereon He bled,
The spoiler scare away.

But be thou gather'd:—one and all
Those simple nestlings see,
How hurrying at their mother's call,
To their one home, whate'er befall,
In faith entire they flee.

4.

NOONTIDE.

"They looked steadfastly toward Heaven, as He went up."

THE shepherd boy lies on the hill
At noon with upward eye;
Deep on his gaze and deeper still
Ascends the clear blue sky.

You pass him by, and deem perchance
He lies but half awake,
And picture in what airy trance
His soul may sport or ache.

Full wakeful he, both eye and heart,
For he a cloud hath seen
Into that waste of air depart,
As bark in ocean green.

'Tis gone, and he is musing left;—
What if in such array
Our Saviour through the aërial cleft
Rose on Ascension Day?

That hour, a glorious cloud, we know,
Hid Him from human sight,
While pastoral eyes were strain'd below
To trace Him through the light.

Oh if but once such awful thought,
In sleep or waking dream,
At night or noontide, came unsought,
Like haunting sound of stream,

Surely thou durst not let it go;
Oft as thine eye shall turn
Where overhead the clear deeps glow,
Thine heart must inly burn,

Wondering what mortal first shall view
The dread returning sign,
When the strong portals, rais'd anew,
Disclose the march divine.

Blest shall he be, that sinner's child,
If upward in that tide
His eye be turn'd, nor wandering-wild,
Nor clos'd in inward pride:

Blest, if the glory o'er him break
Through chancel roof, or where
Some mourner's bed good Angels make,
And Pain is sooth'd by Prayer.

5.

THE GLEANERS.

"They joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest."

THE Church is one wide Harvest Field,
Where Time and Death are gathering in
Rich blessings by the Almighty Owner seal'd
For spirits meet His pardoning word to win.

We are as children: here and there
A few fall'n ears, the sheaves among,
We glean, where best the bounteous Hand may spare,
So learning for His perfect store to long.

Come, little ones, come early out,
Come joyous, come with steady heart,
Roam not to seek wild flowers the field about,
Nor yet at dreams of fancied vipers start.

The sun of Autumn climbs full fast;
He will have quaff'd each drop of dew,
Ere half the fragrant, heathy lane be pass'd;
The lingerers, they will find scant ears and few.

Come, quit your toys, and haste away.
But mark: ye may not leave behind
Your store of smiles, your gladsome talk and gay,
Your pure thoughts, fashion'd to your Master's mind.

Blithe be your course, yet bear in heart
The lame and old, and help them on;
Full handfuls drop, where they may take a part,
As high will swell your heap when day is done.

Yon slumbering infant in the shade,—
Grudge not one hour on him to wait
While others glean. The work with singing aid,
With ready mirth all sharper tones abate.

Sing softly in your heart all day
Sweet carols to the Harvest's Lord,
So shall ye chase those evil powers away
That walk at noon—rude gaze and wanton word.

But see, the tall elm-shadows reach
Athwart the field, the rooks fly home,
The light streams gorgeous up the o'er-arching beech,
With the calm hour soft weary fancies come.

In heaven the low red harvest-moon,
The glow-worm on the dewy ground,
Will light us home with our glad burdens soon;
Grave be our evening prayers, our slumbers sound.

6.

AUTUMN BUDS.

"The children crying in the Temple, Hosanna to the Son of David."

How fast these autumn leaves decay!—
But nearer view the naked spray,
And many a bud thine eye will meet
Prepar'd with ready smile to greet
The showers and gleams of spring.

Such buds of hope are Advent hours:
Ere the Old Year its leaves and flowers
Have shed, the New in promise lives;
Christmas afar glad token gives,
Soft carols faintly ring.

So when our Lord in meekness rode
Where few save wintry hearts abode,
Each leaf on Judah's sacred tree
Was wither'd, wan, and foul to see,
Touch'd by the frost-wind's wing.

Yet lurk'd there tender gems beneath,
Ere long to bloom in glorious wreath.
While Priest and Scribe look'd on and frown'd,
His little ones came chanting round,
Hosanna to their King.

7.

THE OAK.

"What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?"

Come, take a woodland walk with me,
And mark the rugged old Oak Tree,
How steadily his arm he flings
Where from the bank the fresh rill springs,
And points the waters' silent way
Down the wild maze of reed and spray.
Two furlongs on they glide unseen,
Known only by the livelier green.

There stands he, in each time and tide,
The new-born streamlet's guard and guide.
To him spring shower and summer sun,
Brown autumn, winter's sleet, are one.
But firmest in the bleakest hour
He holds his root in faith and power,
The splinter'd bark, his girdle stern,
His robe, grey moss and mountain fern.

Mark'st thou in him no token true
Of heaven's own Priests, both old and new,
In penitential garb austere
Fix'd in the wild, from year to year
The lessons of stern love to teach,
To penitents and children preach,
Bold words and eager glances stay,
And gently level JESUS' way?

8.

THE PALM.

"Palma virens semper manet conservatione et diuturnitate, non immutatione foliorum."—*St. Ambrose, Hexaemeron*, iii. 71.

Why of all the woodland treasure,
Holy Palm, art thou preferr'd,
When the voice of praise is heard,
When we tread our thankful measure?
Why before our Saviour borne?
Why by glorious Spirits worn?

Is it for thy verdure, brightest
In the zone of colours bright?
Or that with aërial height
Thou the genial clime requitest,
Like courageous mountain maid,
Nor of sun nor air afraid?

Is it that in antique story
Conquerors own'd thee for their meed?
Nay, thine honours are decreed
For thy green unchanging glory,
Wearing thy first leafy crown,
Till thy vigorous life die down.

Pines may tower, and laurels flourish—
Deathless green is only thine;
Type of hearts which airs divine
Cheer, and high communions nourish,
Hearts on whose pure virgin wreath
Sin indulg'd might never breathe.

9.

THE WATERFALL.

"Ye also as lively stones, are built up, a spiritual House."
"I will make thy seed as the dust of the Earth."

'WHAT is the Church, and what am I?
A world, to one poor sandy grain,
A waste of sea and sky
To one frail drop of rain.

"What boots one feeble infant tone
To the full choir denied or given,
Where millions round the Throne
Are chanting, morn and even?"

Nay, the kind Watchers hearkening there
Distinguish in the deep of song
Each little wave, each air
Upon the faltering tongue.

Each half note in the great Amen,
Even by the utterer's self unheard,
They store: O fail not then
To bring thy lowly word:

Spare not to swell the bold acclaim:
So in the future battle-shout,
When at the Saviour's Name
The Church shall call thee out,

No doubtful sound thy trump shall pour.
Remember, when in earlier days
Thou toil'dst upon the floor
Palace or tower to raise,

No mimic stone but found a place,
And glorious to the builder shone
The pile: then how should Grace
One living gem disown,

One pearly mote, one diamond small,
One sparkle of th' unearthly light?—
Go where the waters fall
Sheer from the mountain's height;

Mark how, a thousand streams in one,
One in a thousand, on they fare,
Now flashing to the sun,
Now still as beast in lair.

Now round the rock, now mounting o'er,
In lawless dance they win their way,
Still seeming more and more
To swell as we survey.

They win their way, and find their rest
Together in their ocean home.
From East and weary West,
From North and South they come.

They rush and roar, they whirl and leap,
Not wilder drives the wintry storm:
Yet a strong law they keep,
Strange powers their course inform.

Even so the mighty sky-born Stream:—
Its living waters from above
All marr'd and broken seem,
No union and no love.

Yet in dim caves they haply blend,
In dreams of mortals unespied:
One is their awful End,
One their unfailing Guide.

We that with eye too daring seek
To scan their course, all giddy turn:—
Not so the floweret meek,
Harebell or nodding fern:

They from the rocky wall's steep side
Lean without fear, and drink the spray;
The torrent's foaming pride
But keeps them green and gay.

And Christ hath lowly hearts, that rest
Amid fallen Salem's rush and strife:
The pure, peace-loving breast
Even here can find her life.

What though in harsh and angry note
The broken flood chafe high? they muse
On mists that lightly float,
On heaven-descending dews,

On virgin snows, the feeders pure
Of the bright river's mountain springs:—
And still their prayers endure,
And Hope sweet answer brings.

If of the Living Cloud they be
Baptismal drops, and onward press
Toward the Living Sea
By deeds of holiness,

Then to the Living Waters still
(O joy with trembling!) they pertain,
Join'd by some hidden rill,
Low in Earth's darkest vein.

Scorn not one drop: of drops the shower
Is made, of showers the waterfall:
Of children's souls the Power
Doom'd to be Queen o'er all.

10.

THE STARRY HEAVENS.

"So shall thy seed be."

"More and more Stars! and ever as I gaze
Brighter and brighter seen!
Whence come they, Father? trace me out their ways
Far in the deep serene."
My child, these eyes of mine but faintly show
One step on earth below:
And even our wisest may but dream, they say,
Of what is done on high, by yon empyreal ray.

Thou know'st at deepening twilight, how afar
On heath or mountain down
The shepherds kindle many an earthly star,
How from the low damp town
We through the mist the lines of torchlight trace
In dwellings proud or base:
But whom they light, what deeds and words are there,
We know but this alone—'tis well if all be prayer.

Whether on lonely shades the pale sad ray
From a sick chamber fall,
Or amid thousands more beam glad and gay
From mirthful bower or hall,
If pure the joy, and patient be the woe,
Heaven's breath is there, we know:
And surely of yon lamps on high we deem
As of pure worlds, whereon the floods of mercy stream.

Yea, in each keen heart-thrilling glance of theirs
Of other stars we read,
Stars out of sight, souls for whom Love prepares
A portion and a meed
In the supernal Heavens for evermore,
When sun and moon are o'er;
Fix'd in the deep of grace and song, as these
In the blue skies, and o'er the far-resounding seas.

More and more stars, here in our outward Heaven,
More and more Saints above!
But to the wistful gaze the sight is given,
The vision to meek love,—

Love taught of old to treasure and embalm
What'er in morning calm
Or evening soft steals from the gracious skies,
The dry ground freshening with the dews of Paradise.

All humble holy gleams I bid thee seek,
Dim lingering here below;
So shall the Almighty give a tongue to speak,
A heart to read and know
Of Saints at Home, rob'd and in glory crown'd.
Dews on the lowly ground
May as we downward gaze true token yield,
Yea even in glaring morn, of midnight Heaven's pure field.

Stars to the childish eye may gather'd seem
Into strange shapes and wild,
Lion or Eagle, Bear or Harp—such dream
As heathen hearts beguil'd:—
Or as a flock untended, roaming wide
Heaven's waste from side to side:
But of a central glory sages sing,
Whence all may be discern'd in clear harmonious ring.

Such are Saints' ways—the forms so manifold
Our mystic Mother wears,
O far unlike our dreamings, young and old!—
But Faith still onward fares,
Love-guided, heaven-attracted, till she reach
The orb whence all and each
By golden threads of order and high grace
Are pendent evermore, all beauteous, all in place.

More and more Stars! behold yon hazy arch,
Spanning the vault on high,
By planets travers'd in majestic march,
Seeming to earth's dull eye
A breath of gleaming air: but take thou wing
Of Faith, and upward spring:—
Into a thousand stars the misty light
Will part; each star a world with its own day and
night.

Not otherwise of yonder Saintly host
Upon the glorious shore
Deem thou. He marks them all; not one is lost;
By name He counts them o'er.

Full many a soul, to man's dim praise unknown,
May on its glory-throne
As brightly shine, and prove as strong in prayer,
As theirs, whose separate beams shoot keenest through
this air.

My child, even now I see thy tender breath
Full quickly come and go
At sound of praise. O may the touch of Faith
Those chords so fine and low
Early controul, and tune thy heart too high
For aught beneath the sky.
So may that little spark of glory swell
To a full orb, and soar with loftiest Saints to dwell.

VIII.

Lessons of Grace.

1.

ISAAC ON MORIAH.

"Abide you here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship."

DREAD was the mystery on Moriah's hill:
Low on the ridge the cloud of morning lay:
From each dark fold, along each gliding rill,
Strange whispers from the mountain met our way.

But we must wait below, and upward gaze,
While toward the mount the father and the son
Pursue their course, soon in that awful haze
To vanish, till the appointed deed be done.

So when the Lord for some parental heart
Prepares a martyr's crown, He calls on high
Father and child, in His still shrine apart
To learn His lore of healing agony.

We may but stay without, and wondering pray;
Unknown to us that deep of love and woe,
The knife in Abraham's hand uprais'd to slay,
Meek Isaac bound and waiting for the blow.

Weak as the echo of some distant knell,
Borne now and then on breathing winds of eve,
Comes to our ear the sound:—"I see full well
The fire and wood; but who the Lamb will give?"

Fitful and faint, should Angel bless our dream,
The memory now would fleet and now abide.
Such to our hearts the stern sweet form may seem
Of him who said, "The Almighty will provide."

Not even to dwellers on the mystic height,
Not to the Saints, is full enlightening given:
The Cross, they hold by, towers beyond their sight,
On the hill peak opens a deeper heaven.

Yea, though in one were gather'd all the woes
That mourners e'er on household altars laid,
Widows' and orphans' tears, untimely throes,
Fears, that the memory of lov'd souls o'ershade,

What were it all, to match one drop of Thine,
One bitter drop, pour'd on Thy mountain here
In Thine own hour? O joy! that Blood is mine:—
For us it flow'd, even as for Saint and seer.

Well may we mourn our dull cold heart, and eye
That up the mount of glorious sacrifice
Sees such a little way: yet kneel we nigh:
Turn not away: let prayer in gloom arise.

He who beside His own the Cross allows
Of penitential grief;—who to each Saint
Calls from His height of woe;—His bleeding brows
Will meekly droop to hear our breathing faint.

2.

SONG OF THE MANNA-GATHERERS.

"This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."

Comrades, haste! the tent's tall shading
Lies along the level sand
Far and faint: the stars are fading
O'er the gleaming western strand.
Airs of morning
Freshen the bleak burning land.

Haste, or ere the third hour glowing
With its eager thirst prevail
O'er the moist pearls, now bestrowing
Thymy slope and rushy vale,—
Dews celestial,
Left when earthly dews exhale.

Ere the bright good hour be wasted,
Glean, not ravening, nor in sloth:
To your tent bring all untasted;—
To thy Father, nothing loth,
Bring thy treasure:
Trust thy God, and keep thy troth.

Trust Him: care not for the morrow:
Should thine omer overflow,
And some poorer seek to borrow,
Be thy gift nor scant nor slow.
Wouldst thou store it?
Ope thine hand, and let it go.

Trust His daily work of wonder,
Wrought in all His people's sight:
Think on yon high place of thunder,
Think upon the unearthly light
Brought from Sinai,
When the prophet's face grew bright.

Think, the Glory yet is nigh thee,
Power unfelt arrests thine arm,
Love aye watching, to deny thee
Stores abounding to thy harm.
Rich and needy,
Are all levell'd by Love's charm.

Sing we thus our songs of labour
At our harvest in the wild,
For our God and for our neighbour,
Till six times the morn have smil'd,
And our vessels
Are with twofold treasure pil'd.

For that one, that heavenly morrow,
We may care and toil to-day:
Other thrift is loss and sorrow,
Savings are but thrown away.
Hoarded manna!—
Moths and worms shall on it prey.

While the faithless and unstable
Mars with work the season blest,
We around Thy heaven-sent table
Praise Thee, Lord, with all our best.
Signs prophetic
Fill our week, both toil and rest.

Comrades, what our sires have told us—
Watch and wait, for it will come:
Smiling vales shall soon enfold us
In a new and vernal Home:
Earth will feed us
From her own benignant womb.

We beside the wondrous river
In the appointed hour shall stand,
Following, as from Egypt ever,
Thy bright Cloud and outstretch'd Hand:
In Thy shadow
We shall rest, on Abraham's land.

Not by manna showers at morning
Shall our board be then supplied,
But a strange pale gold, adorning
Many a tufted mountain's side,
Yearly feed us,
Year by year our murmurings chide.

There, no prophet's touch awaiting,
From each cool deep cavern start
Rills, that since their first creating
Ne'er have ceas'd to sing their part.
Oft we hear them
In our dreams, with thirsty heart.

Oh, when travel-toils are over,
When above our tranquil nest
All our guardian Angels hover,
Will our hearts be quite at rest?
Nay, fair Canaan
Is not heavenly Mercy's best.

Know ye not, our glorious Leader
Salem may but see, and die?
Israel's guide and nurse and feeder
Israel's hope from far must eye,
Then departing
Find a worthier throne on high.

Dimly shall fond Fancy trace him,
Dim though sweet her dreams shall prove,
Wondering what high Powers embrace him,
Where in light he walks above,
Where in silence
Sleeping, hallows heath or grove.

Deeps of blessing are before us:
Only, while the desert sky
And the sheltering cloud hang o'er us,
Morn by morn, obediently,
Glean we Manna,
And the song of Moses try.

3.

THE GIBEONITES.

"I will follow upon mine enemies, and overtake them, neither will I turn again till I have destroyed them."

"Behold me, Lord, a worthless Gibeonite,
Unmeet to bear one burthen in Thy sight,
To hew Thy servant's wood, or water draw,
Yet trusted with Thine own eternal Law.
The deadlier sure the guilt, the doom more drear,
Should Canaan powers prevail—and they are near.
The world of Sense, five mighty Monarchs, hard
Upon me lies, and I Thy robe have marr'd.
Chariot and horse they come, a fearful fray:—
I cannot stand alone this evil day."—
"Go, sham'd and scar'd, seek Joshua in thy need,
Him and all Israel: they for thee shall plead.
Their voice hath power to stay the sun, and win
The frail fall'n mourner time to hate his sin.

But when their prayer hath laid the Tempter low,
Be sure thou crush him: deal out blow on blow:
Set thy stern foot upon his neck, and hide
His corse, unpitying, in the dark cave's side;
Nor venture but in thought to move the stones
That guard his place, lest even in those dry bones
Some quickening fiend the bold bad life renew,
And thou in sevenfold guilt thy heart's backsliding
rue."

4.

DAVID'S CHILDHOOD.

"I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the Wicked One."

CHRISTIAN child, whoe'er thou be,
Purer oil than David knew,
Mingling with baptismal dew,
Heaven hath dropp'd on thee.

Strength is given thee, watch to keep
O'er the lamb He bought so dear,
Thine own soul to watch in fear:—
Sleep no faithless sleep.

When the Lion and the Bear,
Childish Pride and childish Wrath,
Lay athwart thy morning path,
Thou didst win by prayer.

Now a mightier foe is nigh;
Holy hands for a new strife
Thee have stor'd with ampler life:
Set thine heart on high.

Not with sword and shield and lance,
But with charm-words from our Book,
Gems from our baptismal Brook,
Meet his stern advance.

He through every gate of sense,
Eye and ear, taste, touch, and smell,
Fain would hurl the shafts of hell:
Seek thou strong defence.

Guard in time those portals five
With the smooth stones from the Fount,
With the Law from God's own Mount:
So thy war shall thrive.

Keep thy staff, the Cross, in hand:
Thou shalt see the giant foe
By the word of Faith laid low,
O'er him conquering stand.

Mark and use the trial-hour:
When his whispers nearest sound,
Be thou then most faithful found;
Then tread down his power.

Stripling though thou be, and frail,
Thy right arm shall wield his sword,
Wield, and take his head abhorr'd,—
Christ in thee prevail.

5.

ELIJAH AT SAREPTA.

"Make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son."

Lo, cast at random on the wild sea sand
A child low wailing lies:
Around, with eye forlorn and feeble hand,
Scarce heeding its faint cries,
The widow'd mother in the wilderness
Gathers dry boughs, their last sad meal to dress.

But who is this that comes with mantle rude
And vigil-wasted air,
Who to the famish'd cries, "Come, give me food,
I with thy child would share?"
She bounteous gives: but hard he seems of heart
Who of such scanty store would crave a part.

Haply the child his little hand holds forth,
That all his own may be.—
Nay, simple one, thy mother's faith is worth
Healing and life to thee.
That handful given, for years ensures thee bread:
That drop of oil shall raise thee from the dead.

For in yon haggard form He begs unseen,
To Whom for life we kneel:
One little cake He asks with lowly mien,
Who blesses every meal.
Lavish for Him, ye poor, your children's store,
So shall your cruse for many a day run o'er.

And thou, dear child, though hungering, give glad way
To JESUS in His need:
So thy blest mother at the awful day
Thy name in Heaven may read;
So by His touch for ever may'st thou live,
Who asks our alms, and lends a heart to give.

6.

NAAMAN'S SERVANT.

"Who hath despised the day of small things?"

"WHO for the like of me will care?"
So whispers many a mournful heart,
When in the weary languid air
For grief or scorn we pine apart.

So haply mus'd yon little maid
From Israel's breezy mountains borne,
No more to rest in Sabbath shade
Watching the free and wavy corn.

A captive now, and sold and bought,
In the proud Syrian's hall she waits,
Forgotten—such her moody thought—
Even as the worm beneath the gates.

But One who ne'er forgets is here:
He hath a word for thee to speak:
Oh serve Him yet in duteous fear,
And to thy Gentile lord be meek.

So shall the healing Name be known
By thee on many a heathen shore,
And Naaman on his chariot throne
Wait humbly by Elisha's door;

By thee desponding lepers know
The sacred waters' sevenfold might.
Then wherefore sink in listless woe?
Christ's poor and needy, claim your right!

Your heavenly right, to do and bear
All for His sake; nor yield one sigh
To pining Doubt; nor ask, "What care
In the wide world for such as I?"

7.

HEZEKIAH'S DISPLAY.

"There is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them."

When Heaven in mercy gives thy prayers return,
And Angels bring thee treasures from on high,
Shut fast the door, nor let the world discern,
And offer thee fond praise when God is nigh.

In friendly guise, perchance with friendly heart,
From Babel, see, they haste with words of love:
But if thou lightly all thy wealth impart,
Their race will come again, and all remove.

Ill thoughts, the children of that King of Pride,
O'er richest halls will swarm, and holiest bowers,
Profaning first, then spoiling far and wide:—
Voluptuous Sloth make free with Sharon's flowers.

Close thou the garden-gate, and keep the key,
  There chiefly, where the tender seedlings fold
Their dainty leaves—a treasure even to thee
  Unknown, till airs celestial make them bold.

When sun and shower give token, freely then
  The fragrance will steal out, the flower unclose:
But busy hands, and an admiring ken,
  Have blighted ere its hour full many a rose.

Then rest thee, bright one, in thy tranquil nook,
  Fond eyes to cherish thee, true arms to keep,
Nor wistful for the world's gay sunshine look;—
  In its own time the light will o'er thee sweep.

Think of the babes of Judah's royal line:—
  Display but touch'd them with her parching glare
Once, and for ages four they bear the sign,
  The fifth beheld them chain'd in Babel's lair.

8.

ST. JOSEPH.

"He called His Name Jesus."

The glorious Sun at morn
Draws round him a soft screen,
Clear haze, of light and moisture born;
So are the bright forms seen,

His royal cradle round
Standing in meet array,
Clouds of all hues, not wholly drown'd
In dazzling floods of day.

Thou temperest, Lord, the rays
Which in Thy manger burn,
Till Faith in that deep glory-blaze
Dim shapes of earth discern:

The spotless Mother, first
Of creatures: His mild eye,—
O favour'd!—who her travail nurs'd,
And Thy dread infancy.

Him o'er Thee lowly bent,
Or meekly waiting nigh,
Or on some homely task intent,
Yet conscious who is by,

Or on the journey wild,
With duteous staff in hand,
Guiding the Mother and the Child
Across the sea of sand,

Thy Church in memory views;
Nor can her babes aright
On Bethlehem or on Nazareth muse,
But he is still in sight.

O balm to lonely hearts,
Who childless or bereft,
Yet round the cradle find their parts,
Their place and portion left

In bowers of home delight:—
Yet may they draw full near,
And in the treasure claim their right,
Their share of smile and tear,

Of thrilling joys and cares.—
"Father in God:"—who knows
How near it brings us, unawares,
To true parental throes?

Mightier perchance may prove
The lore the Font imparts
To strangers, than all yearning love
In heathen Mothers' hearts.

Whom JESUS Father own'd[k],
Though childless to our eyes,
Doubt not, his soul was higher ton'd
To parents' sympathies

Than sires on earth may know:—
And when His Octave came,
He o'er the Lord did first below
Speak the Most Holy Name.

[k] St. Luke ii. 48, 49.

Wherefore in chorus kind
Of household jubilee,
Name thou his name with willing mind,
Who spake Christ's Name o'er thee.

And when at holy tide,
Along the Church-way borne
Thou seest how babes in triumph ride
On arms by rude toil worn;—

Or mark'st, how well agree,
Both leading and both led,
Grey Poverty and childish Glee;—
Leave not His lore unread:

Then of Saint Joseph think,
And of his dread Nurse-Child.
Let eyes, that day, from evil shrink,
And hearts be undefil'd.

9.

THE BOY WITH THE FIVE LOAVES.

"If thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little."

WHAT time the Saviour spread His feast
For thousands on the mountain's side,
One of the last and least
The abundant store supplied.

Haply, the wonders to behold,
A boy 'mid other boys he came,
A lamb of JESUS' fold,
Though now unknown by name.

Or for his sweet obedient ways
The Apostles brought him near, to share
Their Lord's laborious days,
His frugal basket bear.

Or might it be his duteous heart,
That led him sacrifice to bring
For his own simple part,
To the world's hidden King?

Well may I guess how glow'd his cheek,
How he look'd down, half pride, half fear:
Far off he saw one speak
Of him in JESUS' ear.

"There is a lad—five loaves hath he,
And fishes twain:—but what are they,
Where hungry thousands be?"—
Nay, Christ will find a way.

In order, on the fresh green hill,
The mighty Shepherd ranks His Sheep
By tens and fifties, still
As clouds when breezes sleep.

Oh who can tell the trembling joy,
Who paint the grave endearing look,
When from that favour'd boy
The wondrous pledge He took?—

Keep thou, dear child, thine early word;
Bring Him thy best; who knows but He
For His eternal board
May take some gift of thee?

Thou prayest without the veil as yet;
But kneel in faith: an arm benign
Such prayer will duly set
Within the holiest shrine.

And Prayer has might to spread and grow.
Thy childish darts, right-aim'd on high,
May catch Heaven's fire, and glow
Far in the eternal sky:

Even as He made that stripling's store
Type of the Feast by Him decreed,
Where Angels might adore,
And souls for ever feed.

10.

THE MOURNERS FOLLOWING THE CROSS.

"Weep not for Me, but for yourselves and for your children."

THERE is no grief that ever wasted man,
But finds its hour here in Thine awful week:
And since all Mother's love from Thee began,
Sure none, like Thee, of Mother's woe can speak.
Thine ear prophetic, Lord, while angels wreak
The vengeance on Thine heritage defil'd,
While temples crash, and towers in ashes reek,
And with each gust some kingdom strews the wild,
Loses no lonely moan, no sigh of sobbing child.

Even so might seamen's wives at midnight drear
Lie listening to the blast, and tell aright
The tale of all the waves, that far and near
Break on the reef, yet miss no wailing slight
Of nestling babe, for wonder or delight
Uttering faint cries in sleep.—O restless care!
Oh all foreseeing pity!—be our flight
In winter, soothing spells will He prepare,
And for His lambs allay the bleak heart-killing air.

Or if the holy Day the few brief hours
Of flight abridge, for nursing-mother frail,
For tender babe, Thou send'st Thine unseen powers
To help or hide:—hide in the lowly vale,
Help o'er the weary mountain.—Ne'er may fail
The prayer of helpless Faith;—but she must pray,
Her forceful knocking must Heaven's door assail:
For so of old He taught: "Pray that your way
Be not in winter wild, nor on the Sabbath Day."

The season He bids choose, who in strong hand
Winter and summer holds, and day and night,
Binding His sovereign will in Love's soft band;—
As parents teach their little ones to write
With gentle-guiding finger, and delight
The wish and prayer to mould, then grant the boon:—
Such is Thy silent grace, framing aright
Our lowly orisons in time and tune
To Litanies on high, controlling sun and moon.

And as the heart maternal evermore
Must rise in prayer, so the maternal feet
Must feel their dim way on the lonely shore,
Ere o'er the path the unpitying surges beat.

At early dawn, the fresh spring dews to greet,
I bid thee haste, else vainly wilt thou crave
An hour in winter. Fast the week-days fleet,
Slow speeds the work: the lingerers who shall save?
Thy task ere Sunday end, thy life before the grave.

Who may the horror but in dream abide,
Breathless to knock, and by the portal wait
Where Saints have past behind their glorious Guide,
Then feel, not hear, the sad drear word, "Too late?"
Woe, in that hour, to souls that seek the gate
Alone! but deeper anguish, direr gloom,
If to thy bosom clinging, child or mate,
Pupil or friend, the heaven-prepared room,
Tardy through thee, should miss, and share the hopeless doom.

11.

ST. ANDREW AND HIS CROSS.

"Where I am, there shall also My servant be."

O Holy Cross, on thee to hang
At Jesus' side, and feel thee sweet,
And taste aright each healing pang,
What Saint, what Virgin Martyr e'er was meet!

Two only of His own found grace
The very death He died to die.
Joyful they rush'd to thine embrace,
While Angel choirs, half envying, waited by.

Joyful they speed:—but now is this?
Why doubt they yet, in Jesus' power
To grasp their crown of hard-won bliss?
Well have ye fought; why faint in Victory's hour?

Two brothers' hearts were they, the first
Who shone as stars in JESUS' Hand,
For thee in Prayer and Fasting nurs'd,
And bearing thee, dread Cross! from land to land.

And now in wondrous sympathy,
When thou art nearer fain to draw,
These who had yearn'd so long for thee
Shrink from thy touch, and hide their eyes for awe.

He who denied—he dares not scale
With forward step thy holy stair.
Best for his giddy heart and frail
In humblest penance to hang downward there.

And he, that saintly Elder meek,
Wont of old time to find and bring
Brother or friend with Christ to speak,
As worthier to behold the heart-searching King:—

Ah little brook'd his lowly heart,
Such glorious crown should him reward.
He sought the way with duteous art
To change his Cross, yet suffer with his Lord.

He sought and found: and now where'er
Saint Andrew's holy Cross we see,
In royal banner blazon'd fair,
Or in dread Cipher, Holiest Name, of thee,

A martyr'd form we may discern,
There bound, there preaching: Image meet
Of One uplifted high, to turn
And draw to Him all hearts in bondage sweet.

And as we gaze may He impart
The grace to bear what He shall send,
Yet stay the rash self-pleasing heart,
Too forward with His Cross our penal woe to blend.

IX.

Holy Places and Things.

1.

PREPARING FOR SUNDAY SERVICES.

"As they went to tell His Disciples, JESUS met them, saying, 'All hail.'"

BEHOLD, athwart our woodland nest,
And down our misty vale,
From his own bright and quiet rest
The Sunday sun looks out, and seems to say, "All hail."

True token of that brighter Day,
Which hail'd, this matin hour,
The holy women on their way.
They sought His Church in love, He met them in His power.

And dare we the transporting word
To our own hearts apply?
Trembling we dare; for He had heard
Our lowly breathèd vows, ere flam'd yon morning sky.

We have been by His Cross and grave;
His Angel bade us speed
Where they resort whom He will save,
And hear and say as one, "The Lord is risen indeed."

Then speed we on our willing way,
And He our way will bless.
In fear and love thy heart array;
Straight be thy churchway path, unsoil'd thy Sabbath dress.

2.

WALK TO CHURCH.

"The path of the Just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Now the holy hour is nigh,
Seek we out the holy ground;
Overhead the breezy sky,
Rustling woodlands all around:
Fragrant steams from oak-leaves sere,
Peat and moss and whortles green,
Dews that yet are glistening clear
Through their brown or briary screen.

Hie we through the autumnal wood,
Pausing where the echoes dwell,
Boys, or men of boyish mood,
Trying how afar they swell.
Haply down some opening glade
Now the old grey tower we see,
Underneath whose solemn shade
JESUS risen hath sworn to be.

He hath sworn, for there will meet
  Two or three in His great Name,
Waiting till their incense sweet
  Feel His heaven-descended flame.
Day by day that old grey tower
  Tells its tale, and week by week
In their tranquil hoary bower
  To the unlearn'd its shadows speak.

3.

THE LICH-GATE.

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God."

This is the portal of the dead.—
Nay, shrink not so, my fair-ey'd boy,
But on the threshold grating tread
With wary softness: tame the joy,
The wildfire keen, that all the way
Even from our porch at home hath danc'd with thee so gay.

This is the holy resting-place,
Where coffins and where mourners wait,
Till the stol'd priest hath time to pace
His path toward this eastern gate,
Like one who bears a hidden seal
Of pardon from a king, where rebels trembling kneel.

Brief is the pause, but thoughts and dreams
By thousands on that moment crowd,
Of clouds departing, opening gleams,
A waning lamp, a brightening shroud:
Such visions fill the longing eyes
As haply haunt the space 'twixt earth and Paradise.

Such visions in the churchyard air
Are gleaming, fluttering all around.
O scare them not away: beware
Of bolder cry and ruder bound.
Thick as the bees that love to play
Under the lime-tree leaves the livelong summer day,

And tunable as their soft song,
And fragrant as the honey'd flowers
They haunt and cherish, is the throng
Of thoughts in these our hallow'd bowers.
On every gale that stirs the yew
They float, and twinkle in each drop of morning dew.

Oh then revere each old grey stone,
And gently tread the mounds between.
So when thy blithesome days are done,
And thou, as I, shalt wearied lean
Upon the wicket low, and tell
Thy tale of playmates call'd before thee here to dwell;—

When thou shalt mark, how swarms the street
With boys at play, the turf with graves,
All in one little hour to meet
And hear the doom that slays or saves;—
Fresh may the memory prove and dear,
How thou hast come and gone, since first we brought thee here.

Then shall the wings, so strong in need,
Which met thee at the Font that hour,
And homeward joy'd with thee to speed,
O'ershade thee still in love and power,
And with the churchyard shadows blend,
Which thy last entering here shall in sweet peace attend.

4.

OBEISANCE AT ENTERING CHURCH.

"They shall see His Face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads."

COME hear with duteous mind
Thy Mother's whisper'd word.
"Wouldst thou upon His threshold find
Thy dread and loving Lord?
Renew in silence on thy brow
The pledge of thy first saving vow."

Safe in thy forehead keep
The mark by JESUS set.
Before thee is a mighty deep,
A baptism waits thee yet:
As Lazarus rising, such thou art,
Thy soul and flesh again to part.

But when thy Lord and thou,—
Thou from the grave, and He
From Heaven.—shall meet, upon thy brow
A glorious Cross shall be,
A Light that needs no watching o'er,
Even as He rose, and died no more.

5.

THE EMPTY CHURCH.

"The blind and the lame came to Him in the temple."

Why should we grudge the hour and house of prayer
To Christ's own blind and lame,
Who come to meet Him there?
Better, be sure, His altar-flame
Should glow in one dim wavering spark,
Than quite die down, and leave His temple drear and dark.

"But in our Psalm their choral answers fail."—
Nay, but the heart may speak,
And to the holy tale
Respond aright in silence meek.
And well we know, bright angel throngs
Are by, to swell those whisperings into warbled songs.

What if the world our two or three despise?
They in His name are here,
To Whom in suppliant guise
Of old the blind and lame drew near.
Beside His royal courts they wait
And ask His healing Hand: we dare not close
the gate.

6.

CHURCH DECORATIONS.

"I will not offer burnt-offerings without cost."

Why deck the high cathedral roof
With foliage rich and rare,
With crowns and flowerets far aloof,
To none but Angels fair?

"Why for the lofty Altar hide
Thy gems and gold in store?
Why spread the burnish'd pall so wide
Upon the chancel floor?"

Nay, rather ask, why duteous boy
And mother-loving maid
Scarce in their filial gifts find joy,
If nought of theirs be paid:

Why hearts, that true love-tokens need
For brother or for friend,
Count not the cost with careful heed,
But haste their all to spend.

Ask why of old the favour'd king
Enquir'd the Temple's price,
Not bearing to his Lord to bring
An unbought sacrifice.

Yea, lowly fall, and of thy Lord
In silence ask and dread,
Why prais'd He Mary's ointment, pour'd
Upon His Sacred Head.

7.

CHURCH WINDOWS.

"The Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints with Thee: and it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark."

Oft have I heard our elders say,
How sad the autumnal hour,
How rude the touch of stern decay,
How fast the bright hues melt away
In mountain, sky, and bower!

Yet is it dear delight to me
The rustling leaves to tread,
To heap and toss them wild and free,
Their fragrance breathe, and o'er them see
Soft evening lustre shed.

And some will say, 'tis drear and cold
In holy Church to kneel
With one or two, Christ's little fold,
With blind and lame, with poor and old,
There met for Him to heal.

Nay, look again: the Saints are there:
Christ's ever-glowing Light
Through heavenly features grave and fair
Is gleaming; all the lonely air
Is throng'd with shadows bright.

The Saints are there:—the Living Dead,
The Mourners glad and strong;
The sacred floor their quiet bed,
Their beams from every window shed,
Their voice in every song.

And haply where I kneel, some day,
From yonder gorgeous pane
The glory of some Saint will play:—
Not lightly may it pass away,
But in my heart remain!

8.

RELICS AND MEMORIALS.

"As the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land."

THE Twelve holy men are gather'd in prayer,
The Psalm mounts on high, the Spirit descends:
A keen silent thrilling is round them in air,
A Power from the Highest with thought and word blends.

They pass by the way, to sight poor and mean.
How glorious the train that streams to and fro!
The blind, dumb, halt, wither'd, by hundreds are seen,
The prisoners of Satan lie chain'd where they go.

O lay them but where the shadow may fall
Of Christ's awful Saint, to prayer as he speeds:
The mighty love-token all fiends shall appal,
A gale breathe from Eden, assuaging all needs.

Or bring where they lie Paul's girdle or vest:
One touch and one word:—the pain fleets away,
The dark hour of frenzy is charm'd into rest:—
The hem of Christ's garment all creatures obey.

Christ is in His Saints: from Godhead made Man
The virtue goes out, the whole world to bless.
O'er lands parch'd and weary that shadow began
To spread from Saint Peter, and ne'er shall grow less.

See Acts iv. and v.

9.

CARVED ANGELS.

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for in Heaven their angels do always behold the Face of My Father."

GREATEST art Thou in least, O Lord,
And even Thy least are great in Thee:
A mote in air, a random word,
Shall save a soul if Thou decree:—
Much more their presence sweet,
Whom with an oath Thou didst into Thy Kingdom greet.

A little child's soft sleeping face
The murderer's knife ere now hath staid:
The adulterous eye, so foul and base,
Is of a little child afraid.
They cannot choose but fear,
Since in that sign they feel God and good Angels near.

For by the Truth's sure oath we know,
There is no christen'd babe but owns
A Watcher mightier than his foe,
One of the everlasting Thrones,
Who in high Heaven His face
Beholding ever, best His likeness here may trace.

As in each tiny drop of dew,
Glistening at prime of morn, they mark
Of Heaven's great Sun an image true,
Hear their own chantings in the Lark,
So, sleeping or awake,
They love to tend their babes for holy Bethlehem's sake.

And so this whole fallen world of ours,
To us all care, and sin, and spite,
Is even as Eden's stainless bowers
To the pure spirits out of sight,—
To Angels from above,
And souls of infants, seal'd by new-creating Love.

Heaven in the depth and height is seen;
On high among the stars, and low
In deep clear waters: all between
Is earth, and tastes of earth: even so
The Almighty One draws near
To strongest seraphs there, to weakest infants here.

And both are rob'd in white, and both
On evil look unharm'd, and wear
A ray so pure, ill Powers are loth
To linger in the keen bright air.
As Angels wait in joy
On Saints, so on the old the duteous-hearted boy.

God's Angels keep the eternal round
Of praise on high, and never tire.
His Lambs are in His Temple found
Early, with all their heart's desire.
They boast not to be free,
They grudge not to their Lord meek ear and bended knee.

O well and wisely wrought of old,
Nor without guide, be sure, who first
Did cherub forms as infants mould,
And lift them where the full deep burst
Of awful harmony
Might need them most, to waft it onward to the sky:—

Where best they may in watch and ward
Around the enthronèd Saviour stand,
May quell, with sad and stern regard,
Unruly eye and wayward hand,
May deal the blessèd dole
Of saving knowledge round from many a holy scroll.

What if in other lines than ours
They write, in other accents speak?
There are whom watchful Love empowers
To read such riddles;—dutcous seek,
And thou shalt quickly find.
The Mother best may tell the eager babe's deep mind.

Haply some shield their arms embrace,
Rich with the Lord's own blazonry.
The Cross of His redeeming grace,
Or His dread Wounds, we there descry.
His standard-bearers they:
Learn we to face them on the dread Procession Day.

And O! if aught of pride or lust
Have soil'd thee in the world, take heed:
Entering, shake off the mire and dust.
Angelic eyes are keen, to read
By the least lightest sign,
When we foul idle thoughts breathe in the air divine.

And how, but by their whisperings soft,
Feel virgin hearts when sin is near,
Sin even in dreams unknown? Full oft
Such instinct we may mark in fear,
Nor our own ill endure
In presence of Christ's babes, and of their Guardians pure.

10.

CHURCH RITES.

"Christ is all, and in all."

THE wedding guests are met,
The urns are duly set,
Even as the Lord had taught His own of old.
Fill'd are they to the height
With water pure and bright:—
Now pour them out—'tis done, and purest wine behold.

The bridegroom kneels beside
His bashful loving bride;
Earth on that hour seems showering all her best.
But more than Earth e'er knew
He wins, if hearts be true:—
An Angel friend, to share his everlasting rest.

A babe in deep repose
Where holy water flows
Is bath'd, while o'er him holiest words are said.

A child of wrath he came—
Now hath he JESUS' Name:
A glory like a Saint's surrounds his favour'd head.

A mortal youth I saw
Nigh to God's Altar draw
And lowly kneel, while o'er him pastoral hands
Were spread with many a prayer,
And when he rose up there,
He could undo or bind the dread celestial bands.

When Bread and Wine he takes,
And of Christ's Passion makes
Memorial high before the Mercy Throne,
Faith speaks, and we are sure,
That offering good and pure
Is more than Angels' bread to all whom Christ will own.

Mid mourners I have stood,
And with sad eye pursued
The coffin sinking in the grave's dark shade:
The immortal life, we know,
Dwells there with hidden glow,
Brightly to burn one day when sun and stars shall fade.

What is this silent might,
Making our darkness light,
New wine our waters, heavenly Blood our wine?
Christ, with His Mother dear,
And all His Saints, is here,
And where they dwell is Heaven, and what they touch, divine.

The change of water into wine was believed by the ancients to typify that change which St. Paul in particular so earnestly dwells on: "*Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new.*" And St. John, "*He that sitteth on the Throne saith, Behold, I make all things new.*" Accordingly St. Cyprian applies this first miracle to the admission of the Gentiles into the Church. (Ep. 63; ed. Fell.) And St. Augustine, to the evangelical interpretation of the Old Testament. (In Joan. Tract. 8.) And St. Cyril of Alexandria (in loc.) to the Spirit superseding the letter. This then being the "*beginning of miracles*," a kind of pattern of the rest, shewed how Christ's glory was to be revealed in the effects of His Sacramental Touch; whether immediately, as when He touched the leper and healed him: or through the hem of His garment: or by Saints, His living members, according to His Promise, "*The works that I do shall ye do also: and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto My Father.*" Thus, according to the Scriptures, the Sacramental Touch of the Church is the Touch of Christ: and her system is "*deifica disciplina*," a rule which, in some sense, makes men gods, and the human, divine; and all this depends on the verity of the Incarnation, therefore His Mother is especially instrumental in it; besides being, as nearest to Him, the most glorious instance of it. "*The Mother of Jesus is there, and both Jesus and His Disciples are called,*" —(He as the Bridegroom and Author of the whole mystery, they as ministers, servants, and instruments,)—to this mysterious "*marriage*," or Communion of Saints.

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

I. The Chrisom.

"These are they which have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb."

All gorgeous hues are in the pure white beam,
All Christian graces in one drop of Love
That sparkles from the bright baptismal stream
Over the fair young brow, where gently move
Christ's dawning rays. Therefore the veil ye wove,
Good Angels, under Bethlehem's healing star,
Whose virtue this our new-born joy shall prove,
Is spotless white: and from its folds afar,
Even as from banner wav'd in Angels' war,
The dark Powers flee. But thou, heaven-honour'd child,
Let no earth-stain thy robe of glory mar:
Wrap it around thy bosom undefil'd;
Yet spread it daily in the clear Heaven's sight,
To be new-bath'd in its own native Light.

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

II. The Sunday Dress.

"Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments."

So keep thou, by calm prayer and searching thought,
Thy Chrisom pure, that still as weeks roll by,
And Heaven rekindles, gladdening earth and sky,
The glow that from the grave our Champion brought,
Pledge of high victory by His dread Wounds wrought,
Thou may'st put on the garb of Purity,
And from thy prayer look up with open eye,
Him owning, who from shame and sinful blot
Hath kept thee safe, nor suffer'd base desire
Thy soul to haunt, unhallowing the good hour.
Then on thy way to church rejoicing fare,
Yet heedful, gathering up from earthly mire
The glittering folds: for even in Sunday air
Foul spirits love to lurk with tainting power.

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

III. Confirmation.

"Ye shall be as the wings of a Dove, that is covered with silver wings."

Speed on, ye happy Sunday hours, O speed
The moment when a richer gift shall crown
A riper faith:—when Childhood, casting down
Her innocent vesture, the pure Chrisom weed,
Shall claim the sevenfold radiance, erst decreed
Where true hearts kneel 'neath Apostolic hands.
White are his mantle folds, who ready stands
Before the shrine, to bless and intercede:
And duteous maidens, skilful in Love's law,
Unbidden use in stainless white to come:
As doves, that to the bright clouds upward draw,
Plume the soft lily breast, the more to win
Of splendour from the Light's far cloudless home.
O deep, that hour, the bliss or curse within!

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

IV. Priests in White.

"When they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments."

And even the very walls of the dread place,
And the tall windows with their breathing lights,
Speak to the adoring heart, and say, No base
Or week-day garb may him beseem, who writes
God's message here in hearts of men,—invites
To the bright nuptial feast of joy and grace.
But Angels waiting on our awful rites
Should in our frail and mortal Angel trace
Some hue of their own robes, what time they raise
The censer, heap'd with prayer, before the throne:
And Innocents, in wonder mov'd to gaze
On the new glory, mantling forms well known,
Should ask and learn the clue to Angels' ways:—
"The vision is for the pure heart alone."

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

V. Choristers in White.

"— the Levites which were the singers, ... with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen."

Within a reverend Minster I have stood,
As one to whom, for many a godless deed,
The Choir was clos'd: —fit penance and due meed
Sad conscience own'd it:—one by one I view'd
With wistful eye the entering multitude.
At last with joyous step, but sober heed
Of holy things, like fawns in forest mead,
Timid yet happy, the white-rob'd brood
Of Choristers swept by:—then musings came,
"What happier dawn of being than to meet
Matins and vespers here with punctual feet?
What happier close, than here in peace to lay,
Wearing the white robe still, th' exhausted frame,
And so, through life, Heaven's garb and speech assay?"

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

VI. Bridal White.

"And unto her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white."

Once more unto Thine Altar, Lord, once more
In vesture of Thy Saints: for Joy and Love
Have vow'd, to-day, their best on earth to prove,
And Pureness, guardian sole of their rich store
Of blessing and delight. Arm we the more
Both heart and limb with brightness from above:
So may we scare the noisome beasts that rove
There busiest, where Earth's rapture most runs o'er.
Well are they warn'd, who in that dangerous bliss
May on some Innocent look down, array'd
In bridal white, flower of the nuptial band,
Unconscious, yet o'erjoy'd: nor far amiss
Deem they perchance, who in that smiling maid
Heaven's youngest Angel see, with wreath in hand.

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

VII. Penitents in White.

"Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him."

But what if Chrisom robes be sin-defil'd,
If nuptial white of broken vows bear trace,
If he who daily in the holy Place
Wears the bright albe, in heart be gross and wild,
So that the stones, whereon the shrine is pil'd,
Seem to cry out, "Who hath requir'd this grace
Of thee, the consecrated floor to pace,
Thrice pledg'd and thrice forsworn?" O Saviour mild,
Hast Thou, for these, a white robe yet in store?
Yea: the Church path is by the fount of tears,
And a grave Angel stands beside the door,
Laden with vests for contrite pilgrims meet.
Him trust with all; sad memories and dim fears;
Then kneel in white before the Mercy-seat.

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

VIII. White upon the Altar.

"He bought fine linen, and took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen."

O Lord, give gracious humbleness of heart,
And chaste and grave imaginings, in awe
Veil'd evermore, that as we nearer draw
To Thy tremendous Altar, or impart
Unto Thy little ones the skill and art
Of holy things, and the mysterious law
Whereby Faith sees whate'er Apostles saw,
No ill may glance or eye or mind athwart.
So unreprov'd may we to babes declare
The secret of the Altar's snow-white pall,
And of the linen garment, bright and fair,
Spread o'er the glorious Sacrifice when all
Have tasted. 'Tis as Jesus' winding-sheet,
And theirs, who die clasping His sacred Feet.

11.

WHITE APPAREL.

IX. The Winding Sheet.

"Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon."

Pure is the glory of the Chrisom vest;
Joyous the Sunday-robe; all hope and might
The heavenly gleam, when dovelike wings alight
On the twice-sealèd brow; benignly rest
The smiles of Angels on the mitred crest
And flowing skirt of Priests, whose stainless white
The heart belies not; or on striplings bright,
Glancing like spirits through the region blest;
Or on glad bridal train, around the shrine
Gather'd with starlike and unchanging gleam;
But most where dimly robes of penance shine.
Yet all is vain, if the last glory fail,
If with the cold pale shroud the Font's pure beam
Blend not, and o'er all hues of death prevail.

12.

REDBREAST IN CHURCH.

"The creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

WHAT is this sudden thrill
Of notes so sweet and keen?
The organ's waves of sound are still
Within the awful screen.
In prayer are bow'd both head and knee,
And yet unbidden rings and free
A chant from one unseen.

A wingèd chorister
From his arch'd nook on high
Makes in the calm a gladsome stir,
His proper melody:
A Redbreast blithe, his evening hymn
Trying amid the shadows dim,
Attracts both ear and eye.

Nor time nor tune are there,
Yet sounds the unruly joy
Meet for the hour, nor spoils the prayer
Even of the gazing boy.
It seems to say, Not man alone
Lives in the shade of JESUS' Throne,
And shares the Saints' employ.

The Angels out of sight
Worship with us, we know;
And who can say what pure warm light
The unreasoning tribes below
May by their kindly wafting feel?
What gleams to guide, what balms to heal
From Christ on earth may flow?

Bird, beast, and insect hail
Warm sun and fragrant shower.
The sheep in Bethlehem's thymy dale,
In Blessed Mary's bower
The ox and ass—to them was given
To see our Lord: the Light of Heaven
Fell on them in that hour.

And since our Lord she bare
In triumph to His place,
One patient beast hath seem'd to wear
The mark of His high grace,
His token to dumb creatures, freed
From slavery and unholy deed,
From cruel tasks and base :—

Freed by the mighty Cross,
And pure.—O mark it, all
Who bear that sign! O fear and loss,
Should ye again enthrall
To woe and wrong His creatures, seal'd
For blessing, aid to earn and yield,
As ere our father's fall!

13.

DISUSE OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

"Having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

O WONDROUS warfare of the Spouse of God,
Trampled to earth, yet wielding bolts so keen,
She dares not hurl them in her wrath abroad,
Only their ireful lustre glares half-seen.

For if she once unlock her quiver'd store,
Once speak the words that in her bosom dwell,
Earth could not bear the sound; the anguish sore
Might drive her haughtiest to the scourge and cell.

For she hath power to shut the Heaven on high,
Oft as in hallow'd air her dread notes thrill,
That no shower fall: and she may smite and try
Earth with all plagues, as often as she will.

Only her potent arm now for a space
Lies wither'd: quench'd and dull her arrowy fires,
Like smouldering brands in daylight, till her race
Wake, as of old, to heaven-born high desires.

But would one Church Christ's awful lore obey,
Like Saints of old,—one household, one true heart,
Such sacrifice might open the dread way
For the Old Signs, for Paul's or Moses' art.

Darkness and mist, at one stern word of thine,
Might even on scorners' outward eyes descend;
Fire might break out of each insulted shrine,
Thy locusts spoil them, and thy lions rend.

Haunt us, dire thought! where'er we walk in sin
That mighty secret Power is all our foe:
But they who bear unharm'd Heaven's seal within
May through the penal fires rejoicing go.

So when the storm is rife among the hills,
Rous'd on his heathery bed the mountain boy
To every flash that through the dim air thrills
Keeps time with eager hands, and screams for joy.

Note from the Life of Sir Walter Scott, i. 83. "There is a story of his having been forgotten one day among the knolls when a thunder-storm came on; and his aunt, suddenly recollecting his situation, and running out to bring him home, is said to have found him lying on his back, clapping his hands at the lightning, and crying out, 'Bonny, bonny,' at every flash."

14.

DISUSE OF INFANT COMMUNION.

"There shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him."

O LORD, behold these babes are Thine,
Thy treasur'd nurslings pure and sweet:
We have sought counsel at Thy shrine:
"Where may they sit with Thee, and eat?"
Thou saidst, "The Water-Bearer meet
Within the chosen City's round,
Trace Him along the hallow'd street,
And where He guides, be duteous found.

"Where glorious Sion rests on high
Amid the hills that on her wait,
Him faithful following, ye shall spy
A wicket in a lowly gate:
There early Knock, there linger late,
There in Christ's Name the room require,
Where the Great Lord in royal state
Shall eat the Bread of His desire.

"Then to the spacious upper room
The Host will bid you onward fare,
Round many a nook of deepest gloom,
Up many a broken wearying stair.
The handmaid Penance hath been there,
And swept and garnish'd all the place.
Haste, and with loyal hands prepare
For Me and Mine the Feast of Grace."

Thou spak'st, and we Thine infants bore,
And bath'd them in the Living Well
That gushes out beside the door,
Where Thou, O Lord, delight'st to dwell:
Then lowly on our knees we fell,
And pray'd, that through the world's hot day
Dews from that hour, a balmy spell,
Might gently freshen all their way.

Now, trembling still as they advance
Up the far shadowing awful nave,
Full oft we bid them backward glance
Where gleaming from its heavenly cave,—

The Saviour's side,—the healing wave
Falls in the fount of their new birth.
The ears that hear its murmuring, crave
No tinsel melodies of earth.

When to the Chancel arch they come,
"Pause here," we say, "and search with fear
If yet the pledge of your high doom
Upon the sealèd brow appear.
If worn and faint, by many a tear
Renew the lines, then humbly kneel
Till He invite—till sure and near
The gliding of soft wings ye feel.

"Then to the inner shrine make haste,
Fall prostrate with anointed brows,
Adore, and of the Adorèd taste.
Such bliss the Love untold allows."
Of old, we read, the intrusted Spouse
Her infants to the Anointing led
Straight from the Laver and the vows;—
Yea, Christ was then the children's bread.

But now some mournful instinct chills
  Our Mother's joy, and mars our spring:
She, as of old, to the bright hills
  Her eaglets' speed at once would wing:
  Now far and wide earth's vapours fling
Their tainting dews; and she perchance
  Shrinks from the fall such flight may bring,
Fears the debasing, downward glance.

Then in low place with lowly heart
  Wait we, dear babe, both thou and I,
Bide we our time, and take such part
  In the Bride's awful minstrelsy,
  As she whose laws are seal'd on high
Ordains: and if long lingering tire,
  Yet may we hope, Faith's virgin sigh
The purer mounts, to meet Heaven's fire.

15.

THE OFFERTORY.

"God loveth a cheerful giver."

CHRIST before thy door is waiting:
Rouse thee, slave of earthly gold.
Lo, He comes, thy pomp abating,
Hungry, thirsty, homeless, cold:—
Hungry, by Whom Saints are fed
With the Eternal Living Bread;
Thirsty, from Whose piercèd side
Healing waters spring and glide;
Cold and bâre He comes, Who never
May put off His robe of light;
Homeless, Who must dwell for ever
In the Father's Bosom bright.

In kind ambush alway lying
He besets thy bed and path,
Fain would see thee hourly buying
Prayers against the time of wrath,
Prayers of thankful mourners here,
Prayers that in Love's might appear
With the offerings of the Blest,
At the shrine of perfect rest.
See, His undecaying treasure
Lies like dew upon the grass,
To be won and stor'd at pleasure:—
But its hour will quickly pass.

Christ before His Altar standing,
Priest of Priests, in His own Day,
Calls on thee, some fruit demanding
Of the week's heaven-guarded way.
See His Arm stretch'd out to bless:
Whoso nearest to Him press,
Open-handed, eagle-eyed,
They may best that Arm abide,
When, the last dread lightnings wielding,
He shall lift it, and decree,

"Go, ye churls of soul unyielding,
Where nor gift nor prayer shall be."

Jesus in His babes abiding
Shames our cold ungentle ways,
Silently the young heart guiding
To unconscious love and praise.
See out-reach'd the fingers small,
Ever, at each playful call,
Ready to dispense around
Joys and treasures newly found.
Fearless they of waste or spoiling
Nought enjoy but what they share;
Grudging thought and care and moiling
Live not in their pure glad air.

Strange the law of Love's combining!—
As with wild winds moaning round
Tones from lute or harp entwining
Make one thread of solemn sound;—
As calm eve's autumnal glow
Answers to the woods below;—

As in landscape, leaf or stone,
Cloud or flower, at random thrown,
Helps the sadness or the glory;—
So the gift of playful child
May recall thy natal story,
Church of Salem undefil'd!

How the new-born Saints, assembling
Daily 'neath the shower of fire,
To their Lord in hope and trembling
Brought the choice of earth's desire.
Never incense-cloud so sweet
As before the Apostles' feet
Rose, majestic Seer, from thee,
Type of royal hearts and free,
Son of holiest consolation,
When thou turn'dst thy land to gold,
And thy gold to strong salvation,
Leaving all, by Christ to hold:—

Type of Priest and Monarch, casting
All their crowns before the Throne,
And the treasure everlasting
Heaping in the world unknown.

Now in gems their relics lie,
And their names in blazonry,
And their forms from storied panes
Gleam athwart their own lov'd fanes,
Each his several radiance flinging
On the sacred Altar floor,
Whether great ones much are bringing,
Or their mite the mean and poor.

Bring thine all, thy choicest treasure,
Heap it high and hide it deep:
Thou shalt win o'erflowing measure,
Thou shalt climb where skies are steep.
For as Heaven's true only light
Quickens all those forms so bright,
So where Bounty never faints,
There the Lord is with His Saints,
Mercy's sweet contagion spreading
Far and wide from heart to heart,
From His Wounds atonement shedding
On the blessed widow's part.

16.

CHURCH BELLS.

"Let the hills hear thy voice."

"WAKE me to-night, my mother dear,
That I may hear
The Christmas bells, so soft and clear,
To high and low glad tidings tell,
How God the Father lov'd us well,
How God the Eternal Son,
Came to undo what we had done,
How God the Paraclete,
Who in the chaste womb fram'd the Babe so sweet,
In power and glory came, the birth to aid and greet.

"Wake me, that I the twelvemonth long
May bear the song
About with me in the world's throng;
That treasur'd joys of Christmas tide
May with mine hour of gloom abide;
The Christmas carol ring
Deep in my heart, when I would sing;
Each of the twelve good days
Its earnest yield of duteous love and praise,
Ensuring happy months, and hallowing common ways.

"Wake me again, my mother dear,
That I may hear
The peal of the departing year.
O well I love, the step of Time
Should move to that familiar chime:
Fair fall the tones that steep
The Old Year in the dews of sleep,
The New guide softly in,
With hopes to sweet sad memories akin!
Long may that soothing cadence ear, heart, conscience win."

In the dark winter, ere the snow
Had lost its glow,
This melody we learn'd; and lo!
We hear it now in every breeze
That stirs on high the summer trees.
We pause and look around—
Where may the lone church-tower be found,
That speaks our tongue so well?
The dim peal in the torrent seems to dwell,
It greets us from afar in Ocean's measur'd swell.

Perhaps we sit at home, and dream
On some high theme,
And forms that in low embers gleam,
Come to our twilight Fancy's aid:
Then, wavering as that light and shade,
The breeze will sigh and wail,
And up and down its plaintive scale
Range fitfully, and bear
Meet burden to the lowly whisper'd air,
And ever the sweet bells, that charm'd Life's morn,
are there.

The pine-logs on the hearth sometimes
Mimic the chimes,
The while on high the white wreath climbs,
Which seething waters upward fling,
In prison wont to dance and sing,
All to the same low tune.
But most it loves in bowers of June
At will to come and go,
Where like a minster roof the arch'd boughs show,
And court the pensive ear of loiterer far below.

Be mine at Vesper hour to stray
Full oft that way,
And when the dreamy sounds decay,
As with the sun the gale dies down,
Then far away, from tower or town,
A true peal let me hear,
In manifold melodious cheer,
Through all the lonely grove
Wafting a fair good-night from His high love,
Who strews our world with signs from His own world above.

So never with regretful eye
Need we descry
Dark mountains in the evening sky,
Nor on those ears with envy think,
Which nightly from the cataract shrink
In heart-ennobling fear,
And in the rushing whirlwind hear
(When from his Highland cave
He sweeps unchain'd over the wintry wave)
Ever the same deep chords, such as home fancies crave.

Ever the same, yet ever new,
Chang'd and yet true,
Like the pure heaven's unfailing blue,
Which varies on from hour to hour,
Yet of the same high Love and Power
Tells alway:—such may seem
Through life, or waking or in dream,
The echoing Bells that gave
Our childhood welcome to the healing wave:
Such the remember'd Word, so mighty then to save.

17.

CONTINUAL SERVICES.

(*For the Sunday before Advent.*)

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

O ENDLESS round of Nature's wheel,
How doth thine untir'd course reveal
The universal spring
Of Power and Motion! Not in keen
And sudden startings, far between[1],
But smooth as sea-bird's wing,
Gliding unwearied, now in Air
And now in Ocean,
As though Life's only call and care
Were graceful motion.

[1] "Continuo, non vero per saltum."
Newton.

Such are your changes, Space and Time,
Dying away in softest chime,
With gentlest intervals
Aye lessening on the ear, and felt
As when into each other melt
The hues where evening falls.
Thus moon to moon gives silent place,
And bright stars waning
Gradual retire, while morn's still pace
On night is gaining.

Thus or for increase or decay
The seasons wind their viewless way,
Nor but by word of man
Or measure rude by man impos'd,
Is known when day or year hath clos'd,
Summer or Winter's span.
And ever onward as we go,
The wide earth rounding,
The horizon moves in gentle flow,
Not in harsh bounding.

For why? the unseen Preserver's law
Is nigh, to master and o'erawe
The creatures in their race,
Else starting each its own wild way.
So Nature sav'd from disarray,
Is free to wait on Grace:
And still, as Earth and Time steal on
To their dread ending,
New fragments may of both be won
For holy spending.

Thus high may soar the instructed soul,
Watching young fingers idly roll
The mimic earth, or trace
In picture bright of blue and gold
The orbs that round the sky's deep fold
Each other circling chase.
When plainest strikes the inward ear
What Heaven hath spoken,
Then most for our own chant we fear,
So harsh and broken.

His spheres, recede they or advance,
Before Him in mysterious dance
  Keep tune and time; nor e'er
Fails from this lower world a wreath
Of incense, such as sweet flowers breathe,
  And vernal breezes bear.
Only man's frail sin-wearied heart
    Bears, half in sadness,
A wavering, intermitted part
    In that high gladness.—

Yes: so it was ere JESUS came.
Alternate then His altar-flame
  Blaz'd up and died away;
And Silence took her turn with Song,
And Solitude with the fair throng
  That own'd the festal day.
For in earth's daily circuit then
    One only border
Reflected to the Seraph's ken
    Heaven's light and order.

But now to the revolving sphere
We point, and say, No desert here,
No waste so dark and lone,
But to the hour of sacrifice
Comes daily in its turn, and lies
In light beneath the Throne.
Each point of time, from morn to eve,
From eve to morning,
The shrine doth from the Spouse receive
Praise and adorning.

While on our couch we listless dream,
Or drink perforce of care's dull stream,
Yet somewhere in that hour
The holy words are utter'd, Earth
Is partner made in Angels' mirth,
The unspeakable, pure shower
Of blessings to the unbloody rite
Even now is winging
Its awful way, The Infinite
To meek hearts bringing.

'Tis said, of yore some child of pride
Would vaunt him how his empire wide
The bright sun never left.
So in the Name of our dread King
Of incense and pure offering
We never are bereft.
'Tis morning here, 'tis evening there,
And prayer must vary;
But evermore through silent air,
Nor dull nor weary,

From earth, the footstool of His feet,
Mounts to the Lord the savour sweet
Of that which once for all
He gave upon the Cross, and we
Give daily, earth's release to be
From daily woe and thrall.
Thus to Heaven's Bride, so chaste and sweet,
A voice is granted,
The notes untiring to repeat
In high Heaven chanted.

Then mourn we not with drooping heart,
Though half the globe may seem to part
  Our prayers from home and friends.
Our matins meet their even song,
And the dread Offering, all day long,
  All prayer, all duty blends.
The Eucharist of God's dear Son,
    Like Him undying,
Is mighty, worlds and hearts in one
    For ever tying.-

Wherefore in solemn cheer we pass
(Now that the Church hath turn'd her glass)
  From year to dawning year.
All years to Him are one: and thou,
In virtue of thy first dread vow
  Signing thyself in fear,
Make haste, dear child, and onward press
    To high Communion:—
Thy fragments He will glean, and bless
    With perfect union.

X.

Holy Seasons and Days.

1.

CHRISTMAS EVE: VESPERS.

"If it bear fruit, well: if not, then after that Thou shalt cut it down."

The duteous sun hath ceas'd to keep
The vigil of His wondrous birth,
Who in few hours, while sinners sleep,
Shall dawn on thankless earth.

The sun is set: the stars begin
Their stations in His watch on high,
As once around that Bethlehem inn;
The vesper hour is nigh.

A little maid with eager gaze
Comes hurrying to the House of Prayer,
Shaping in heart a wild green maze
Of woodland branches there.

One look,—a cloud comes o'er her dream:
No burnish'd leaves, so fresh and clear,
No berries with their ripe red gleam:—
"There is no Christmas here."

What if that little maiden's Lord,
The awful Child on Mary's knee,
Even now take up the accusing word:—
"No Christmas here I see.

"Where are the fruits I yearly seek,
As holy seasons pass away,
Eyes turn'd from ill, lips pure and meek,
A heart that strives to pray?

"Where are the glad and artless smiles,
Like clustering hollies, seen afar
At eve along the o'ershaded aisles,
With the first twilight star?"

Spare, gracious Saviour, me and mine:
Our tardy vows in mercy hear,
While on our watch the cold skies shine
Of the departing year.

Ere we again that glimmering view,
Cleans'd be our hearts and lowly laid;
The unfruitful plant do Thou renew,
And all beneath its shade.

By winter frosts and summer heats,
By prunings sharp and waterings mild,
Keen airs of Lent, and Easter sweets,
Tame Thou the sour and wild.

And dare we ask for one year more?
Yea, there is hope: One waits on high
To tell our contrite yearnings o'er,
And each adoring sigh.

If He in Heaven repeat our vow,
We copying here His pure dread Will,—
O dream of joy!—the wither'd bough
May blush with fruitage still.

2.

CHRISTMAS EVE: COMPLINE.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway."

REJOICE in God alway,
With stars in Heaven rejoice,
Ere dawn of Christ's own day
Lift up each little voice.
Look up with pure glad eye,
And count those lamps on high.
Nay, who may count them? on our gaze
They from their deeps come out in ever widening maze.

Each in his stand aloof
Prepares his keenest beam,
Upon that hovel roof,
In at that door, to stream,

Where meekly waits her time
The whole earth's Flower and Prime:—
Where in few hours the Eternal One
Will make a clear new day, rising before the sun.

Rejoice in God alway,
With each green leaf rejoice,
Of berries on each spray
The brightest be your choice.
From bower and mountain lone
The autumnal hues are gone,
Yet gay shall be our Christmas wreath,
The glistening beads above, the burnish'd leaves beneath.

Such garland grave and fair
His Church to-day adorns.
And—mark it well—even there
He wears His crown of thorns.
Should aught profane draw near,
Full many a guardian spear
Is set around, of power to go
Deep in the reckless hand, and stay the grasping Foe.

Rejoice in God alway,
With Powers rejoice on high,
Who now with glad array
Are gathering in the sky,
His cradle to attend,
And there all lowly bend.
But half so low as He hath bow'd
Did never highest Angel stoop from brightest cloud.

Rejoice in God alway,
All creatures, bird and beast,
Rejoice, again I say,
His mightiest and His least;
From ox and ass that wait
Here on His poor estate,
To the four living Powers, decreed
A thousand ways at once His awful car to speed.

Rejoice in God alway:
With Saints in Paradise
Your midnight service say,
For vigil glad arise.

Even they in their calm bowers
Too tardy find the hours
Till He reveal the wondrous Birth:
How must we look and long, chain'd here to sin
and earth!

Ye babes, to JESUS dear,
Rejoice in Him alway.
Ye whom He bade draw near,
O'er whom He lov'd to pray,
Wake and lift up the head
Each in his quiet bed.
Listen: His voice the night-wind brings:
He in your cradle lies, He in our carols sings.

8.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

(While waiting on an Infant at home.)

"Behold, I and the children which God hath given me."

THOU, who didst choose Thine awful room
Within the undefilèd womb,—
The bridal chamber, where our God
For spousals high made brief abode,
High spousals, evermore to bind
The Godhead with our fallen kind:—
Now while the o'erarching clouds among
Echoes the Angels' matin song,
While, heart and hand,
In every land
The Saints their sacrifice prepare
The Cradle to adore of Heaven's dread Heir,
Behold where in the silent shade
Thy slumbering little ones till matin prime are laid.

Soon will a thousand bells ring out,
A thousand roofs the choral shout
Prolong, where Kings with Shepherds meet
His manger with their gifts to greet.
What shall we do, mine infant dear,
Who may not those glad anthems hear?
How shall we serve Him, thou and I,
Far from that glorious company?
Thou smil'st in sleep:
Who knows how deep
The dream of joy that smile denotes?
Mild as the summer lightning, see, it floats,
As if, the new-born Spirit o'er,
Came voices low from where departed babes adore.

Such is thy silent Liturgy,
But what is ours who wait on thee?
We offer thee to Him, this hour,
Who in like slumber veil'd His power:
Thy cradle with its hopes and fears,
Thy May-day smiles and April tears,
Whate'er thou hast, whate'er thou art,

Howe'er thy mother's dreaming heart
Shapes thy bright doom
In years to come;—
All with that offering would we blend,
Which Saints on earth to Angel hands commend
To bear on high, this favour'd day,
And on the sovereign Babe's unquenchèd altar lay.

Mysterious are these smiles of thine;
But of that Face, the Godhead's shrine,
Those holy lips, that awful brow,
Nor Angel then nor Prophet now
Might truly deem; none trace aright
Those hoverings of supernal light.
No more to sight, in earth or heaven,
Shall the Eternal Child be given,
But, Infant dear,
Unveil'd and clear,
Thou shalt behold Him as He died,
Thine eye shall gaze upon the Crucified:
In mercy may He meet thy gaze,
And all the joy fulfil of all His bright glad days!

4.

THE EPIPHANY.

"They saw the young Child with Mary His Mother, and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts."

How gaily seems the sun to rise
On christening days and days of birth,
Whether he smile in summer skies,
Or faintly warm the wintry earth!
Bright are the dreams he drives away,
And bright the promise of that day.
All charms, all gifts of Love are there,
Love breathes in all the fragrant air.

Oh haste we then to-day to greet
Him who is born our glorious King:
Of gold and myrrh and incense sweet
Your treasures to His cradle bring.

The Virgin Mother waiting by
Your offering scans with earnest eye,
Angels and Saints with jealous heed
Watch if you bring your best indeed.

And He, the Holiest, Humblest One,
Making as though He could not see,—
Yet is His Eye all hearts upon.
O may He find some good in me!
A poor, weak, wayward soul is mine,
Yet own I, Lord, Thy saving sign.
Thou seest me daily, how before
Thy gracious footsteps I adore.

Fain would I there my stores unfold,
And of the gifts Thy Love hath given
One heart restore of virgin gold,
One prayer, like incense, seeking Heaven,
One drop of penitential Love,
Fragrant and dear to God above,
Yet bitter in the mouth as gall,
Fain would I bring Thee: 'tis mine all.

O blessèd, who with eyes so pure
  Have watch'd Thy cradle day by day,
Thy look may in their hearts endure,
  Brightening their dim and weary way!
Blest, whom sweet thoughts of Christmas tide
Through all the year may guard and guide,
As on those sages journeying smil'd
In dreams the Mother and the Child.

5.

THE PURIFICATION.

"The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

WHAT buds, what fragrant flowers are here!
Not yet are Christmas garlands sere,
The stern bleak months that lead the year
Are frowning still,
Yet forth they come, no stay, no fear,
And bloom at will.

Each nodding violet spray beneath
What troops of tender nurslings breathe,
Close set as gems in bridal wreath!
April's last day
No richer gift did e'er bequeath
To brightening May.

The snowdrops round the cottage door
Are twinkling gay by tens or more,
The merry children on the floor
As gay within:
The birds tell out their vernal lore
With joyous din.

As they prevent the matin prime,
So, might it seem, sweet nature's chime
Rings out to greet the holy time.
Heaven's softest airs
Wait on the Maid who now shall climb
The Temple stairs.

Pure from her undefilèd throes,
Her virgin matron arms inclose
The only Gift the wide earth knows
Not all unmeet
For the dread place where now she goes,
His mercy-seat.

See the Redeemer on His way
Himself to be redeem'd to-day:
In humblest meekness see her lay
Before the shrine
Such offerings as poor matrons pay,
Want's lowly sign.

But soon the untimely vernal gleam
Must fade away like morning dream,
And ill winds blow, and cold mists stream
On flower and leaf:
So with the glad prophetic theme
Come tones of grief.

"The sword shall pierce thy very soul."
As on some gay glad hour might toll
The funeral knell, or thunders roll
O'er summer night,
So did that word thy joy controul,
Thou Virgin bright!

6.

LENT.

"Sanctify a fast . . . gather the children, and those that suck the breasts."

'Tis said, the immortal Powers on high
Might envy Saints on earth, for they can die;
They for their Lord may suffer loss;
Those but adore, these taste, the healing Cross.
So while in all beside, dear babe, we pine
For hope as pure as thine,
One gift we have, one token more than thou,
With choice of heart beneath the Saviour's yoke to bow.

No deep of joy to thee is lost
From Christmas, Easter, or bright Pentecost:
No memory-cloud in air, to dim
The unfolding heavens, or mar the Seraphs' hymn.

The gladsome days are thine: to us are sent
The wan soft gleams of Lent,
The kindly waters from the heavens above,
From earth to be exhal'd in dews of tearful love.

Our portion in Christ's awful year,
Not thine, is Lent: and yet He calls thee near.
Come, spotless one, He seems to say,
Come with thy pure white robe, and kneel to-day
Beside the fallen and defil'd, and learn
How keen the fires must burn
Of the dread Spirit, purging contrite hearts
With penitential pains, Truth in the inward parts.

Oft have we mark'd thy wistful eye
Fix'd upon ours when evil news came nigh,
As who should say, "My dreams are bright,
"Why should the cloud of woe on thee alight?"
Then sweeter grew thy smile, thy soft caress,
Would closer seem to press,
And for the woe, to thee yet unreveal'd,
Pure balm of kindly hope thou didst unknowing yield.

So be it now: the secret dark
Of wasting sin here in God's awful ark
In mercy may He keep from thee,
Yet be thou near, our penance-hour to see,
Our penance-hour to see, and deeply thrill
At sense of unknown ill.
Thou look'st an Angel: be thy presence found
Like a bright Angel's here, guarding the holy ground.

Oh much we need a loving spell,
To scare away the Powers unclean and fell,
Whom we too oft have tempted nigh,
To bind our burden, dim our upward eye.
Thou from the Font art fresh and undefil'd:
O surely, happy child,
More than angelic power is where thou art,
More than angelic love, to melt the cold dry heart.

7.

EASTER EVE.

"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

THE Primroses with kindly gleam
Are looking out from bower and brake:
As bright and quiet all things seem
As if no heart on earth could ache.

Yet He, the Sun who yester even
Set in that wild tempestuous gloom,
When graves flew wide, and rocks were riven,
Still lingers in the dreary tomb.

Nor blame our peace: for He will rise,
His veil for evermore withdrawn.
O never yet shone vernal skies
So pure, as shall to-morrow dawn.

'Tis in that faith the flowers of Earth
Their very best make speed to wear,
And e'en the funeral mound gives birth
To wild thyme fresh and violets fair.

Stoop, little child, nor fear to kiss
The green buds on this bed of death.
Thou hast thy first baptismal bliss,
Like new-born babe's, thy fragrant breath.

Thy fragrant breath with this sweet air
From briar and turf may duly blend:
But keep it pure with Fast and Prayer,
Come early near, and lowly bend.

8.

EASTER-DAY.

"I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go."

'Twas at the matin hour, early before the dawn,
The prison-doors flew open, the bolts of death were drawn.
'Twas at the matin hour, when prayers of Saints are strong,
Where, two short days ago, He bore the spitting, wounds, and wrong,
From realms unseen, an unseen way th' Almighty Saviour came,
And following on His silent steps an Angel arm'd in flame.
The stone is roll'd away, the keepers fainting fall;
Satan's and Pilate's watchmen—the Day has scar'd them all.

The Angel came full early, but Christ had gone before,
The Breath of Life, the Living Soul, had breath'd itself
once more
Into the sacred Body that slumber'd in the tomb,
As still and lowly, as erewhile in th' undefilèd womb.
And surely not in folds so bright the spotless winding
sheet
Inwrapt Him, nor such fragrance pour'd the myrrh and
aloes sweet,
As when in that chaste Bosom, His awful bed, He lay,
And Mary's prayer around Him rose, like incense, night
and day.

And even as when her hour was come, He left His
Mother mild
A royal Virgin evermore, heavenly and undefil'd,
So left the glorious Body the rock it slumber'd on,
And spirit-like in silence past, nor touch'd the sealèd
stone.
The Angel came full early, but Christ had gone before,
Not for Himself, but for His Saints, is burst the prison
door,

That penitents who bring Him tears and perfume of good deeds
May for His glory school their eyes, watching His funeral weeds.

They who have sinn'd, though much they love,—they who have thrice denied,—
'Tis meet that they awhile beneath the garb of glory hide
A shred of JESUS' grave clothes, such robes as hermits weave;—
But Virgin Love needs only to behold, rejoice, believe.
Dearest, be thine such portion: yet even so, in still
And humble guise draw nigh: such is thy Saviour's will.
Stoop lowly o'er His traces dim, and of His Angels learn
Where face to face He will be met, and for that greeting yearn.

Thou know'st He died not for Himself, nor for Himself arose:
Millions of souls were in His Heart, and thee for one He chose.
Upon the palms of His pierc'd Hands engraven was thy name,

He for thy cleansing had prepar'd His water and His flame.
Sure thou with Him art risen: and now with Him thou must go forth,
And He will lend thy sick soul health, thy strivings, might and worth.
Early with Him thou forth must fare, and ready make the way
For the descending Paraclete, the third hour of the day.

He veil'd His awful footsteps, our all-subduing Lord,
Until the Blessèd Magdalene beheld Him and ador'd.
But through the veil the Spouse may see, for her heart is as His own,
That to His Mother or by sight or touch He made Him known.
And even as from His manger-bed He gave her His first smile,
So now, while Seraphs wait, He talks apart with her awhile;
That thou of all the forms, which to thee His image wear,
Might'st own thy parents first, with thy prime of loving care.

And when that first spring-flower of love is gather'd, be thou seen
Full soon with mourning Peter, and bereavèd Magdalene,
And meet with looks of soothing cheer the women on their way
To find the Lord, nor from beside his musing comrades stray.
To Emmaus see thou lose not the narrow path; for there
With open face He tarries, to give thee Angels' fare.
Where all His Saints assemble, make haste ere twilight cease,
His Easter blessing to receive, and so lie down in peace.

9.

WHITSUN-EVE.

"O my Dove, that art in the clefts of the Rock, ... let me hear thy voice."

WELL fare the Sage, whose dreams of old
Would every cradle fain enfold
In evening clouds of softest sound,
Slow settling ear and heart around,
Then with the breeze at morning prime
Would mingle some heart-thrilling chime,
Some Dorian movement, bold or grave,
Such as in inmost soul they crave,
Who, when the battles of the Lord are fought,
Shrink from their own frail hearts, else fearing nought.

One of the attendant Spirits kind,
Who float unseen on wave or wind,
Such strains have I desir'd erewhile,
When haply with half-pitying smile,
Might to another say, "Behold
The dimly ey'd and narrow soul'd!
He longs for music in the morn,
Nor heeds the lark's unwearied horn.
He finds at eve no soothing lullaby,
Though west winds stir, and whispering pines are nigh."

O heavenly Wisdom, strong and sweet,
How dost thou tune thy lyre, to meet
The wakening or half-dreaming cares
Of souls whom Love for Joy prepares!
How do wild Nature's chords, by thee
Combin'd in varying melody,
Make tunes for holy times! e'en now,
From underneath the fragrant bough,
In notes of hopeful warning the fair Dove
Gives token of the approaching morn of love.

Soft are her tones; for He draws nigh,
Who moveth all things quietly:
Yet grave and deep; for to His sight
Heaven's secrets are undazzling light:
Content; for He on healing wings
The promise of the Father brings:
And Comfort is His name; yet so
That in His promptings here below
A wistful uncomplaining sadness still
Must deeply blend with Joy's adoring thrill.

As yet we but our vigil hold,
Not yet the Whitsun flowers unfold
Their full bright splendours. In the sky
The third hour's sun must ride full high,
Ere to the holy glorious room
The fires of new-Creation come,
Ere on weak hearts, though willing, fall
The rushing mighty wind, in all
The power of its dread harmony, and win,
Ne'er to die down, true echoes from within.

O loving Spirit, gently lay
Thine arm on ours when we would stray!
Prepare us with Thy warnings sweet,
Us and our little ones, to greet
Thy visitations dread and dear!
Grant us, when holy times are near,
In twilight or of morn or eve,
Thy dove-like whisperings to receive,
And own them kindlier for the plaintive mood,
That breathes of contrite Love, mild Hope, and
Joy subdu'd.

10.

WHITSUNDAY.

"The Promise is unto you and to your children."

ONE the descending Flame,
But many were the tongues of fire;
From one bright Heaven they came,
But here and there in many a spire,
In many a living line they sped
To rest on each anointed head.
There, as yon stars in clearest deep of night,
The glory-crowns shone out in many-colour'd light.

One the dread rushing Wind,
But many were the tones of praise,
Love guiding each to find
His way in Music's awful maze.

Many the tongues, the theme was one,
The glory of th' Incarnate Son,
How He was born, how died, how reigns in Heaven,
And how His Spirit now to His new-born is given.

Join'd in that choral cry
Were all estates, all tribes of earth:
Only sweet Infancy
Seem'd silent in the adoring mirth.
Mothers and maidens there behold
The Maiden Mother: young and old
On Apostolic thrones with joy discern
Both fresh and faded forms, skill'd for all hearts to yearn.

Widows from Galilee,
Levites are there, and elders sage
Of high and low degree;
But nought we read of that sweet age
Which in His strong embrace He took,
And seal'd it safe, by word and look,
From Earth's foul dews, and withering airs of Hell:
The Pentecostal chant no infant warblings swell.

Nay, but she worships here,
Whom still the Church in memory sees
(O thought to mothers dear)
Before her Babe on bended knees,
Or rapt, with fond adoring eye,
In her sweet nursing ministry.—
How in Christ's Anthem fails the children's part,
While Mary bears Him thron'd in her maternal heart?

Hear too that Shepherd's voice,
Whom o'er His lambs the Saviour set
By words of awful choice,
When on the shore His Saints He met.
Blest Peter shews the key of Heaven,
And speaks the grace to infants given:
"Yours is the Promise, and your babes', and all,
Whom from all lands afar the Lord our God shall call."

11.

OCTAVES OF FESTIVALS.

"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound."

Even as the close of some grave melody,
Hovering and lingering in the moon's still ray,
Breathes o'er and o'er, reviving ere they die
The notes that are the soul of the sweet lay,
And hearts that own the music, loitering near,
Drink the lov'd cadence with enchanted ear;

So the bright holy days, as one by one
They pass, a glorious week behind them draw.
Nor will their echo cease till they outrun
Their Octave: such is heavenly Music's law.
Nor will Faith's ear grow weary of the strain,
But long for the glad note to sound again.

Whether the tones were pastoral, warbled low
On Christmas Eve, but ere the bright sun rise,

From thousand Seraphs in harmonious flow
O'erspreading earth new-born and gladden'd skies:
Or in high triumph from beside the tomb
The sudden anthem pierc'd the Paschal gloom:

Or cloudlike soar'd the long-drawn melody,
Still upward gliding where the Lord had gone:
Or in all tongues the Pentecostal cry
Rose from all lands in perfect unison:—
For each and all, seven happy nights and days,
The Church untiring holds her note of praise.

For each and all, the eighth mysterious morn
Doth of the first tell o'er the perfect tale.
Lo, from Heaven's deep again the lays are borne
That seem'd for ever past behind the veil.
(For Thy dread Hours, Thou awful Trinity,
Are but the Whitsun airs, new set on high.)

'Tis only our dull hearts that tire so soon
Of Christ's repeated call; while they in heaven,
Unwearied basking in the eternal noon,
Still sound the note, by the first Seraph given,

What time the Morning Stars around their King
Began for evermore to shine and sing.

And you, ye gentle babes, true image here
Of such as walk in white before the Throne,
Ye weary not of Love, how soft soe'er
Her yearnings she repeat in unchang'd tone.
To tale familiar, to remember'd strain,
To frolic ten times tried, ye cry, Again.

How have I seen you, when the unpleasing time
Came for some kindly guest to pass away,
Cling round his skirts! how mark'd the playful chime
Of earnest voices, pledg'd to make him stay!
O deeply sink, and with a tearful spell,
The memories of such welcome and farewell.

Nor wants in elder love the like soft charm.
The Mother tires not of one little voice,
Even as she fain all day with patient arm
Would bear one burthen. O frail heart, rejoice!
Love trains thee now by repetition sweet
The unwasting and unvarying bliss to greet.

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